

Pamphlets and Politics in the Dutch Republic

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VOLUME 7

Pamphlets and Politics in the Dutch Republic

Edited by

Femke Deen
David Onnekink
Michel Reinders



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| BT | <i>Belgica typographica 1541–1600: Catalogus librorum impressorum ab anno MDXLI ad annum MDC in regionibus quae nunc Regni Belgarum partes sunt</i> , ed. E. Cockx-Indestege, G. Glorieux and B. Op de Beck, 4 vols (Nieuwkoop, 1968–1994). |
| Knuttel | W.P.C. Knuttel, <i>Catalogus van de pamfletten-verzameling berustende in de Koninklijke Bibliotheek</i> , 9 vols in 10 bindings (Utrecht, 1978) [Reprint of original version printed in The Hague, 1889–1920]. |
| Petit | L.D. Petit, <i>Bibliotheek van de Nederlandsche pamfletten. Verzameling van de bibliotheek van Joannes Thysius en de bibliotheek der Rijks-Universiteit te Leiden</i> , 3 vols + supplt (The Hague, 1882–1934). |
| Van Someren | J.F. van Someren, <i>Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit te Utrecht. Pamfletten niet voorkomende in afzonderlijke gedrukte catalogi der verzamelingen in andere openbare Nederlandsche bibliotheken</i> , 2 vols (Utrecht 1915–1922). |
| Tiele | P.A. Tiele, <i>Bibliotheek van de pamfletten, traktaten, plakaten en andere stukken over de Nederlandsche geschiedenis; en van in Nederland gedrukte stukken over gebeurtenissen in en buiten Europa, voornamelijk Engeland, Azië en Amerika. Beschreven, naar tijdsorde gerangschikt, en met alphabetische registers voorzien. Beschrijvinge der verzameling van Frederik Muller te Amsterdam, van het begin der 16^{de} tot het midden der 18^{de} eeuw</i> , 3 vols (Amsterdam, 1858–1861). |
| Wulp | J.K. van der Wulp, <i>Catalogus van de tractaten, pamfletten enz. over de geschiedenis van Nederland, aanwezig in de bibliotheek van Isaac Meulman</i> , 3 vols (Amsterdam, 1866–1868). |

Introduction

PAMPHLETS AND POLITICS: INTRODUCTION

Femke Deen, David Onnekink and Michel Reinders

In the Dutch Republic, an intimate relationship existed between politics and pamphlets. Political tracts, edicts, resolutions, correspondence, poems, sermons, songs, plays, dialogues, petitions, eyewitness reports, news stories and commentary were printed in enormous quantities and spread ever more speedily throughout the Republic. Walking through a Dutch town of some size in the middle of the seventeenth century, one would inevitably run into a print shop or a bookstore selling pamphlets reflecting or commenting on political developments, and when visiting one of the many weekly or monthly markets, one would see – and hear – pedlars selling all sorts of publications. A stop at an inn or a trip on a barge involved hearing political news that was often read from popular printed publications, and debating the contents with fellow travellers. In short, printed pamphlets were everywhere in the Dutch Republic, constituting, reflecting, influencing and shaping politics.

Print culture fundamentally changed the political culture of the early modern period and pamphlets played a crucial role in this process. Historians of early modern England have explored the many ways in which pamphlets and politics complemented each other. Jason Peacey, for example, has stressed the impact of print on “practical political life and political processes”,¹ while according to Joad Raymond, the seventeenth century was not only politicised and polarised, “but

¹ J. Peacey, “The Print Culture of Parliament,” in *The Print Culture of Parliament 1600–1800*, ed. J. Peacey (Edinburgh, 2007). Cf. S. Achinstein, *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader* (Princeton New Jersey, 1994); T. Claydon, *William III and the Godly Revolution* (Cambridge, 2004); R. Cust, “News and Politics in Early Seventeenth-century England,” *Past and Present* 12 (1986); A. Fox, “Rumour, News and Popular Political Opinion in Elizabethan and early Stuart England,” *Historical Journal* 40 (1997); T. Harris, “Propaganda and Public Opinion in Seventeenth-Century England,” in *Media and Revolution*, ed. J. Popkin (Lexington, 1995); S. Pincus, *Protestantism and Patriotism. Ideologies and the Making of English Foreign Policy, 1650–1668*, Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History (Cambridge, 1996); J. Stern, “The Rhetoric of popular Orangism, 1650–72,” *Historical Research* 77 (2004); D. Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture. Printing, Petitions, and the Public Sphere in Early-Modern England* (Princeton, 2000).

also pamphletised”.² However, the political dimension of pamphlets in the Dutch Republic is still largely neglected.³ Until quite recently, pamphlets often functioned solely as a “quotation dictionary”, to add colour to descriptions of events.⁴ In the last decade, important steps have been taken in early modern pamphlet research in the Netherlands, but these efforts mostly focused on the literary and cultural aspects of pamphleteering. Historians of the book, literary historians, and art historians have produced illuminating studies on the production and distribution of these publications, and on the metaphors and different forms, styles and images that were used.⁵

The marginal attention to political pamphlets in the Netherlands is even more striking if we consider that the Dutch Republic was a front-runner of pamphleteering. The Dutch printing industry was highly sophisticated and has been described as “the experimental garden” of Europe.⁶ Contemporaries noted the omnipresence of pamphlets in the

² J. Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2003), 380.

³ Important exceptions are: C.E. Harline, *Pamphlets, Printing and Political Culture in the early Dutch Republic* (Dordrecht, 1987); M. Reinders, *Gedrukte Chaos. Populisme en moord in het Rampjaar 1672* (Amsterdam, 2010); V. van Zuilen, “The Politics of Dividing the Nation? News Pamphlets as a Vehicle of Ideology and National Consciousness in the Habsburg Netherlands (1585–1609),” in *News and Politics in Early Modern Europe (1500–1800)*, ed. J.W. Koopmans (Leuven/Paris/Dudley, 2005).

⁴ Harris, “Propaganda and Public Opinion,” in *Media and Revolution*, ed. Popkin, 48. Jason Peacey, has recently argued: “So long as tracts and pamphlets are read, cited and employed without being contextualized, scholars will only be able to tell part of the story.” J. Peacey, *Politicians And Pamphleteers. Propaganda During The English Civil Wars And Interregnum* (Aldershot, 2004), 10. Cf. D. Roorda, *Partij en factie. De oproeren van 1672 in de steden van Holland en Zeeland, een krachtmeting tussen partijen en factie* (Groningen, 1961).

⁵ *Het lange leven van het pamflet*, C. Dingemanse, *Rap van tong, scherp van pen. Literaire discussiecultuur in praatjespamfletten (circa 1600–1750)* (Hilversum, 2008); *Boekhistorische, iconografische, literaire en politieke aspecten van pamfletten 1600–1900*. ed. J. de Kruif, M. Meijer Drees and J. Salman (Hilversum, 2006); J. Vrieler, *Het poëtisch accent. Drie literaire genres in zeventiende-eeuwse Nederlandse pamfletten* (Hilversum, 2007).

⁶ W. Frijhoff and M. Spies, *1650. Bevuchten Eendracht* (The Hague, 1999), 177. Cf. G.C. Gibbs, “The Role of the Dutch Republic as the Intellectual Entrepôt of Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth Centuries,” in *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 86 (1971); *ibid.*, “Press and Public Opinion. Prospective,” in *Liberty Secured? Britain before and after 1688*, ed. J.R. Jones (Stanford, 1992); *The Bookshop of the World. The Role of the Low Countries in the Book-trade 1473–1941*, ed. A. Duke et al. (‘t Goy-Houten, 2001); S. Groenveld, “The Mecca of Authors? States Assemblies and Censorship in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch Republic,” in *Too Mighty to be Free. Censorship and the Press in Britain and the Netherlands*, ed. A. Duke and C.A. Tamse (Zutphen, 1988); P.G. Hoftijzer, ‘*Rijk van Pallas*’, *rede uitgesproken bij de aanvaarding van het ambt van bijzonder hoogleraar in de geschiedenis van het boek vanwege de Dr. P. A. Tiele-stichting aan de Universiteit Leiden op*

Republic and their role in creating an arena for political debate. In the 1640s, English pamphleteers complained that England had become too much “Amsterdammified by several opinions” and that “Opinion” had recently moved from Holland to England.⁷

For the political historian, the study of pamphlet debates, even those that appeared non-political at first sight, can turn out to be fruitful.⁸ In early modern public debates, the political implication of an issue could be dormant, but it hardly ever stayed that way for long. Non-political debates had a tendency to erupt into well-known political or ideological dichotomies. The pamphlet wars of the early modern age thus offer a rich and largely unexplored sequence of debates that, taken together, present Dutch political culture in all its facets.

In short, we still lack full understanding of the relationship between politics and print in the Dutch Republic. This volume of essays tries to redress this issue. To get a clearer and more historically accurate image of the political use of pamphlets, we need to re-evaluate them as a historical source.⁹ Moreover, rather than merely constituting reflections on politics, pamphlets should be regarded as ‘political actors’ in their own right. In so far as they represented political debates, pamphlets had the propensity and capability to shape and reshape the parameters of political discourse, and as such the possibilities and limitations of political action. Since the conduct of politics cannot be divorced from discourse, the intimate relationship between politics and pamphlets was, in fact, symbiotic.

Writing history by taking pamphlets as a guide has the potential of providing insightful clusters of heated debates that instigated,

5 september 2003 (Leiden, 2003); H. Schilling, “Civic Republicanism in late Medieval and Early Modern German Cities,” in *ibid.*, *Religion, Political Culture and the Emergence of Early Modern Society. Essays in German and Dutch History* (Leiden/New York, 1992), 51; L.H.M. Wessels, “Het pamflet. De polsslag van het heden,” in *De Palimpsest. Geschiedschrijving in de Nederlanden 1500–2000*, ed. J. Tollebeek, T. Verschaffel and L.H.M. Wessels (Hilversum, 2002), 84; Raymond, *Pamphlets*, 75.

⁷ Quoted in Peacey, *Politicians*, 315 and in Raymond, *Pamphlets*, 255–257.

⁸ M. Peereboom, “‘Lisje Jans haar kous ley aan duygen.’ Een medische pamflettenstrijd in Amsterdam,” in *Vingerafdrukken. Mengelwerk van medewerkers bij tien jaar Short-Title Catalogue, Netherlands* (The Hague, 1995), 91–105; S. Cerutti, “De Socratische Oorlog. Een pamflettenstrijd over geloof, homoseksualiteit en persvrijheid,” in *Het lange leven van het pamflet*, ed. De Kruif, Meijer Drees and Salman. Kevin Sharpe and Steven Zwicker have argued that “There is an important sense in which no seventeenth-century literature is not also political”. K. Sharpe and S. Zwicker, “Politics of Discourse. Introduction,” in *Politics of Discourse. The Literature and History of Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. K. Sharpe and S. Zwicker (Berkeley, 1987), 3; Wessels, “Het pamflet”, 91.

⁹ Peacey, *Politicians*, 20.

influenced, constituted or commented on crucial political events. Our main goal, then, is a revision of the role that pamphlets played in early modern political debates.

Pamphlets and public opinion

With the recognition that the pamphlet played an important role in early modern politics, we also encounter our first serious problem: The issue of representativeness.¹⁰ Put simply: What do we read when we look at pamphlets? According to Steven Pincus, historians have unjustly seen pamphlets as “self-justificatory white noise”.¹¹ Often pamphlet clusters are considered as a chaotic and amorphous mass of slander and sedition. Pamphlets were seen, for example, as “a cancer, that spread like wildfire”.¹² From a whole body of popular publications, one or two were singled out as being “characteristic” or (to stay loyal to the metaphor of a disease) as “symptomatic” for the whole body of pamphlets.¹³ We suggest that the process be reversed: We should read pamphlets in a given period and investigate the political events to

¹⁰ Cf. S. Achinstein, “Texts in Conflict. The Press and the Civil War,” in *Cambridge Companion to the Civil War*, ed. E.N. Keeble (Cambridge, 2006), 50–68; E. Bellany, “Libels in Action. Ritual, Subversion and the English Literary Underground, 1603–42,” in *The Politics of the Excluded, c. 1500–1850*, ed. T. Harris (Basingstoke, 2001); T.N. Corns, “Radical Pamphleteering,” in *Cambridge Companion to the Civil War*, ed. Keeble; A. van Dixhoorn, “‘Voorstanden van de vrije wetten’. Burgerbewegingen in Arnhem en de Republiek tussen 1702 en 1707,” *Tijdschrift voor Sociale Geschiedenis* 25 (1999); E. Edwards, “Commemorative Poems and other Pamphlets on the Politics of the Grand Pensionary Gaspar Fagel (1672–1688),” *Dutch Crossing* 30 (2006); Gibbs, “Press and Public Opinion,” in *Liberty Secured?*, ed. Jones; A. Halasz, *The Marketplace of Print. Pamphlets and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1997); K. Loveman, “Political Information in the seventeenth Century,” *The Historical Journal* 48 (2005); M. Mendle, “Grub Street and Parliament at the Beginning of the English Revolution,” in *Media and Revolution. Comparative Perspectives*, ed. J.D. Popkin (Kentucky, 1997); J. Peacey, *Politicians*; Pincus, *Protestantism and Patriotism*; J. Raymond, *Pamphlets*.

¹¹ S. Pincus and P. Lake, “Rethinking the Public Sphere,” in *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*, ed. S. Pincus and P. Lake (Manchester, 2007), 2.

¹² M. Meijer Drees, “Pamfletten: een inleiding,” in *Het lange leven van het pamflet*, ed. De Kruif, Meijer Drees and Salman, 26; E. Bellany, “Libels in Action,” 99.

¹³ Rutger de Graaf and Jose de Kruif have argued that “through the work of historians, who usually quote from the body of a dozen of well-known pamphlets, we only see the tip of the iceberg”. R. de Graaf and J. de Kruif, “Schieten met papieren schroot. Pamfletten en dagbladpers in de negentiende eeuw,” in *Het lange leven van het pamflet*, ed. De Kruif, Meijer Drees and Salman, 98–99. For discussion see J.M. Hayden, “The Uses of Political Pamphlets. The example of 1614–15 in France,” *Canadian Journal of History/Annales Canadiennes d’Histoire* 21:2 (1986): 143.

which these publications were connected to assure a proper contextualisation and prevent misrepresentation.¹⁴

Closely connected to the problem of representativeness is the debate on how we can use pamphlets to discern a public's opinion. Historians, especially during the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, have tended to see pamphlet literature as constituting – quite literally – an author's opinion.¹⁵ The sum of all pamphlets could then be considered to have been a 'public' or 'common' opinion. Nowadays, influenced by a revision of Habermas's public sphere and the renewed interest in the ideological force in early modern politics, historians again feel the need to distil a public opinion from pamphlet literature¹⁶ and the Kantian idea of a 'real' opinion has again become subjected to heavy scrutiny.¹⁷ Research in the field of rhetoric, propaganda, and a higher appreciation for the differing motivations behind the production of a publication has shown that it is impossible to simply equate a number of pamphlets that share an opinion with a public opinion.¹⁸

¹⁴ Peacey, *Politicians*, 1.

¹⁵ Theissen labelled pamphlets "the barometer of public opinion". J.S. Theissen, "Pamfletten," *Bibliotheekleven* 12 (1927): 254; N.B. Tenhaeff, *Pamfletten uit de 17^e eeuw, Engelsch-Hollandsche waardeering in de 17^e eeuw. Een parallel tot moderne oorlogsliteratuur* (Utrecht, 1917). Cf. J.A.W. Gunn, "Public Interest," in *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change*, ed. T. Ball, J. Farr and R. Hanson (Cambridge, 1989); H. van der Hoeven, "Verzamelaars en pamfletten," in W.P.C. Knuttel, *Catalogus van de pamflettenverzameling berustende in de Koninklijke Bibliotheek*, 9 vols (Utrecht, 1978) [Reprint], vol. 1. Joad Raymond rightly wrote: "A pamphlet is no more a transparent window onto its author's opinion than a sonnet". Raymond, *Pamphlets*, 214.

¹⁶ Pincus, *Protestantism and Patriotism*; Claydon, *William III and the Godly Revolution*; Harris, "Propaganda and Public Opinion," in *Media and Revolution*, ed. Popkin, 48–73; Achinstein, *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader*; Stern, "The Rhetoric of Popular Orangism"; Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture*.

¹⁷ J. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, 1989), 21–59. Cf. Achinstein, *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader*, 9; C. Calhoun, "Introduction. Habermas and the Public Sphere," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. C. Calhoun (Cambridge/Massachusetts/London, 1992), 2; H. Mah, "Phantasies of the Public Sphere. Rethinking the Habermas of Historians," *The Journal of Modern History* 72:1 (2000); J. Raymond, "The Newspaper, Public Opinion, and the Public Sphere in the Seventeenth Century," in *News, Newspapers, and Society in Early Modern Britain*, ed. J. Raymond (London/Portland, 1999), 120; A.J. La Vopa, "Conceiving a Public. Ideas and Society in Eighteenth-Century Europe," *The Journal of Modern History* 64 (1992). Cf. M. Knights, "How Rational was the later Stuart Public Sphere?" in *The Politics of the Public Sphere*, ed. Lake and Pincus.

¹⁸ K.M. Baker, "Politics and Public Opinion Under the Old Regime. Some Reflections," in *Press and Politics in Pre-revolutionary France*, ed. J.R. Censer and J.D. Popkin (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, 1987), 212–213; J. van Horn Melton, *The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe* (Cambridge, 2001), 12; Peacey, *Politicians and Pamphleteers*, 331; Raymond, "The Newspaper, Public Opinion, and the Public

Two problems complicate the use of pamphlets in current public opinion research. Firstly, there is a tendency to concentrate on well-known canonical pamphlets and see unknown titles as less important. For example, ever since Pieter Geyl labelled Ulricus Huber's pamphlet *De Spiegel van Doleantie* as one of the most intelligent that appeared during the Year of Disaster 1672, historians have considered this pamphlet to have been important for the events in that turbulent year.¹⁹ The pamphlet appeared in two editions, which has taken to be a sign of its popularity. However, Huber's pamphlet was not commented upon in other pamphlets during 1672. Moreover, it addressed the situation in the province in Friesland, which was important for its own sake, but not as important as the events in Holland and Zeeland. Perhaps most importantly, Huber defended only one side in the debate. For some perspective: There were several other pamphlets that appeared at the same time in more than ten editions, that were commented upon by dozens of authors of other pamphlets, that were discussed in correspondence and diaries abundantly, that were actually said to have caused political events, that were vigilantly prosecuted, and that spread messages that taken together constituted a political debate.²⁰ Many of these pamphlets have never been studied. Thus, the public opinion that is 'distilled' from Huber's pamphlets can not be seen as representative for the entire body of publications.

The second issue encountered when using pamphlets in public opinion research is the importance of context. If the goal of studying pamphlets is the discovery of some sort of public opinion, studies in the field of pamphlets can only be executed properly if the pamphlets are examined in combination with other sources, such as correspondence, diaries, petitions, political resolutions and state papers. Only in this way can we begin to understand in what context the publications

Sphere", in *News, Newspapers*, ed. Raymond, 120–128; Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture*, 263; E.H. Shagan, "The Pilgrimage of Grace and the Public Sphere?" in *The Politics of the Public Sphere*, ed. Lake and Pincus, 33, 52.

¹⁹ P. Geyl, "Democratische tendenties in 1672," in *ibid.*, *Pennestrijd over staat en historie. Opstellen over de vaderlandse geschiedenis aangevuld met Geyl's levensverhaal* (Groningen, 1971). Huber's pamphlet is, for instance, the only pamphlet that is reproduced in J.J. Kalma and K. De Vries, *Friesland in het rampjaar 1672. It jier fan de miste kansen* (Leeuwarden, 1972).

²⁰ The pamphlet *Worstelinge Jacobs*, by the Rotterdam preacher Simon Simonides, was printed in thirteen editions in 1672. For an overview of pamphlets in 1672 see Reinders, *Gedrukte chaos*.

appeared and how different publications affected society.²¹ Ever since Elizabeth Eisenstein published her influential *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (1979), her view that the Renaissance, Reformation and the rise of modern science could only have taken place as a consequence of the advent of print has been nuanced considerably.²² Most notably, the enduring importance of the spread of oral and manuscript information has been reclaimed. Print did not replace oral or manuscript culture. On the contrary, scribal and oral culture remained of vital importance until the nineteenth century and even, arguably, until today.²³ From the sixteenth until the eighteenth centuries, all three circuits – print, oral and manuscript – became interwoven.²⁴ The realisation that pamphlets were part of a world wherein people predominantly communicated orally and in manuscript has consequences for the way we look at these publications. So before we move on, we have to ask ourselves: What is a pamphlet?

Context: Pamphlets in the Dutch Republic

There was no such thing as the pamphlet in the early modern Dutch Republic. Despite the fact that the English had been using the word ‘pamphlet’ ever since the late sixteenth century, the Dutch word *pamflet* appeared only in the nineteenth century.²⁵ Until then, these publications

²¹ For this method also see J.M. Hayden, “The Uses of Political Pamphlets,” 146; Peacey, *Politicians*, 16.

²² Revised edition published as: E.L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2000). For an overview of critique: A. Briggs and P. Burke, *A Social History of the Media. From Gutenberg to the Internet* (Cambridge, 2002), 21–22. Cf. A. Johns, *The Nature of the Book. Print Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago/London, 1998). Hoftijzer, ‘*Rijk van Pallas*’, 6.

²³ R.W. Scribner, “Oral Culture and the Diffusion of Reformation Ideas,” in *Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation Germany*, ed. R.W. Scribner (London/Roncervette, 2003); T. Harris, “Introduction,” in *The Politics of the Excluded*, ed. Harris, 9–10. P. Dijstelberge, “Gemengde berichten. Nieuws als literatuur in de zeventiende eeuw,” *Literatuur* 17:5 (2000); N. Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France. Eight Essays* (Stanford, 1975), 218; P. Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (London 1978), 65.

²⁴ H.J. Martin, *The History and Power of Writing*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Chicago/London, 1994), 283; Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture*, 214.

²⁵ E.M.A. Timmer “Pamfletten en perikelen,” in *Koninklijke Bibliotheek gedenkboek 1798–1948*, ed. L. Brummel (The Hague, 1948), 199–218; M. Meijer Drees, “Nederlandse pamfletten (ca.1600–1750) als bron voor de literatuurgeschiedenis,” *Tydskrif vir Nederlands & Afrikaans* 8 (2001); Raymond, *Pamphlets*, 4–11.

went by many names such as *libellen* (libels), *maren* (tidings), *paskwilen* (pasquils), *blauwboexkens* (little blue books) *briefjes* (letters) and *boekjes* (booklets), and they appeared in many different forms: Songs, edicts, poems, petitions, letters and tracts, to name but a few. The semantic ambiguity surrounding the Dutch pamphlets has caused great – and unresolved – debates on the ‘true’ definition of a pamphlet, resulting in the realisation that there is hardly a unique property to the pamphlet.²⁶ Pamphlets were short, but there is no consensus on how many pages it takes to make a publication a pamphlet or a book.²⁷ They were cheap, but prices differed greatly depending on different pamphlet forms, or the time and place that these publications were published and sold.²⁸ They were mostly printed, but recent research tends to incorporate manuscript publications into the story of popular communication.²⁹ They were supposedly written in the vernacular, but anyone who has ever flipped through a pamphlet catalogue has noticed the many Latin, French, English, German and Italian publications.³⁰ In short, historians have been convinced of the importance of a thing that seems to have no defining characteristics.

One way to solve this problem of definition has been to take the audience instead of the publication as the determining factor of what constitutes a pamphlet.³¹ In general, pamphlets have been claimed to have been ‘popular’.³² They were in fact meant for a broad, but by no

²⁶ Cf. P. Verkruijsse, “Gedruckt in seghwaer, op de pars der lijdszaamheit. Boekwetenschap en pamfletliteratuur,” in *Het lange leven van het pamflet*, ed. De Kruif, Meijer Drees and Salman; L.H.M. Wessels, “Het pamflet”.

²⁷ De Graaf and De Kruif, “Schieten met papieren schroot,” 95; Halasz, *The Marketplace of Print*, 3; M. van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt 1555–1590* (Cambridge, 2002), 288; Raymond, *Pamphlets*, 82.

²⁸ P. Verkruijsse, “De verspreiding van populaire literatuur,” in *Nederlandse Literatuur, een geschiedenis*, ed. M.A. Schenkeveld-Van der Dussen (Groningen, 1993); B. van Selm, “... te bekomen voor een civielen prijs. De Nederlandse boekprijs in de zeventiende eeuw als onbekende grootheid,” *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 6 (1990); P.G. Hoftijzer, *Engelse boekverkopers bij de Beurs. De geschiedenis van de Amsterdamse boekhandels Bruyning en Swart (1637–1725)* (Amsterdam/Maarssen, 1987), 71.

²⁹ Raymond, *Pamphlets*, 123; H.J. Martin, *The History and Power of Writing* (Chicago/London, 1994). See also the articles by Femke Deen and Monica Stensland in this volume.

³⁰ P.A.M. Geurts, *De Nederlandse Opstand in de pamfletten 1566–1584* (Nijmegen, 1956), 259.

³¹ For this approach see Harline, *Pamphlets*, 25.

³² Geurts, *De Nederlandse Opstand*, 259; Wessels characterised pamphlets as “a democratic medium”. Wessels, “Het pamflet”; Verkruijsse, “De verspreiding van populaire literatuur”; Harline, *Pamphlets*, 63–70. For a discussion about this “popular” characteristic of pamphlets see R.W. Scribner, “Is a History of Popular Culture Possible?”

means unrestricted audience. In the determination of pamphlet audiences, the price of the medium has (again) traditionally played an important part. It has often been claimed that pamphlets were meant to be as cheap as possible and were consequently aimed at 'the common people' or even more vaguely: "The simple folk".³³ There is little evidence that directly supports this claim. Pamphlets were probably not expensive, but determining what was 'cheap' and 'expensive' is without meaning if we do not take geography, religion, gender, literacy, social cohesion and interest into consideration. Put simply: A pamphlet was not only directed at those who could buy such a publication, but the pamphlet should also be available, readable, intelligible, and the reader should actually have a desire to buy and read it. All these audience-based characteristics point in the direction of pamphleteering as an urban, middle-class undertaking.

If we consider the characteristics of the early modern Dutch Republic – highly urbanised, high literacy, high wages, high level of (indirect) political participation, high number of presses and publishers – all the prerequisites for a pamphlet state par excellence seem present. However, the fact that a person is literate does not mean that he actually reads. The low price of pamphlets tells us little about spending patterns or the prioritisation of buying pamphlets over other commodities. Signs of a high number of pamphlets in circulation in a society at a certain time tell us nothing about where these pamphlets ended up, and comments that seem to signify the desire to read pamphlets might leave a silent majority outside consideration.

In short: We have to do more than look at the characteristics and audience of a pamphlet. We can do this by defining a pamphlet with as

History of European Ideas 10 (1989); T. Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety* (Cambridge, 1991); Harris, "Introduction," in *The Politics of the Excluded*, ed. Harris. Jason Peacey wrote: "The aim was to 'amuse the simple' as much as it was to appeal to the intellectual elite". Peacey, *Politicians*, 319.

³³ J.F. van Someren, "Voorbericht," in *Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit te Utrecht. Pamfletten niet voorkomende in afzonderlijk gedrukte catalogi der verzamelingen in andere openbare Nederlandsche bibliotheken*, ed. J.F. van Someren (Utrecht, 1915–1922); V. van Zuilen, "Bronnen van identiteit. Het algemeen Nederlands saamhorigheidsgevoel in enkele pamfletten over de Nederlandse Opstand," in *Het lange leven van het pamflet*, ed. De Kruijf, Meijer Drees and Salman, 73–74; A. Th. van Deursen, *Mensen van klein vermogen. Het 'kopergeld' van de Gouden Eeuw* (Amsterdam, 1999). Cf. Harris, "Propaganda and Public Opinion," in *Media and Revolution*, ed. Popkin; M. van Otegem, "Tijd, snelheid, afstand. De mechanica van het pamflet," *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 17:1 (2001): 53; Wessels, "Het pamflet", 85; R.W. Scribner, *For the Sake of the Simple Folk. Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation* (Oxford, 1994).

few restrictions as possible, simply as a topical publication, and look at the different ways in which these topical publications were used in early modern history.³⁴ The function of the pamphlet, so it appears overwhelmingly, was in most cases to persuade and convince the audience for political ends.³⁵ Despite the absence of a common denominator, there was, however, a commonly shared idea among inhabitants of the early modern Dutch Republic that there existed a form of topical publication that was intimately connected to current events, that was meant to criticise, support, or in general polarise people and groups: In short, publications that were meant “to do something here and now”.³⁶ Or, as A.J.P. Taylor eloquently put it: “A pamphlet is argument or it is nothing”.³⁷

Contrary to what some pamphlet collectors and historians have argued, publications from political bodies were an important part of the political debate and should be seen as political pamphlets.³⁸ Edicts, resolutions, *plakkaten* and letters were abundantly published. Moreover, they were published for a reason: Either they were put on the market to polemicise (meant to influence ideas in general) or for reasons of propaganda (meant to influence ideas at a certain time, in a certain place for the benefit of a certain politician).³⁹

If we want to get a grip on the complete political debate, we should therefore combine different pamphlet collections, since all collections have been compiled according to different assumptions of what constitutes a pamphlet. For the Dutch situation, the Knuttel catalogue

³⁴ Van Otegem, “Tijd, snelheid, afstand”.

³⁵ K. Sharpe and S. Zwicker, “Introduction. Refiguring Revolutions,” in *Refiguring Revolutions. Aesthetics and Politics from the English Revolution to the Romantic Revolution*, ed. Sharpe and Zwicker (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, 1996), 9–10; Gibbs, “Press and Public Opinion”, in *Liberty Secured?*, ed. Jones; Harris, “Introduction”; Peacey, *Politicians*; M. Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation in Later Stuart Britain. Partisanship and Political Culture* (Oxford, 2005); Raymond, *Pamphlets*; J.K. Sawyer, *Printed Poison. Pamphlet Propaganda, Faction Politics and the Public Sphere in Early Seventeenth-Century France* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/Oxford, 1990).

³⁶ W. Bilderdijk, *Geschiedenis des Vaderlands*, 13 vols (Amsterdam, 1832–1853), vol. 10 (1835); J. Wagenaar, *Vaderlandsche historie, vervattende de geschiedenissen der nu vereenigde Nederlanden, inzonderheid die van Holland, van de vroegste tyden af: uit de geloofwaardigste schryvers en egte gedenkstukken samengesteld*, 21 vols (Amsterdam, 1752–1759), vol. 14 (1756), 137; D.J.H. ter Horst, “Over het begrip pamflet,” *Bibliotheekleven* 17 (1932): 13; Harline, *Pamphlets*, 78.

³⁷ A.J.P. Taylor, “Introduction,” in *British Pamphleteers*, ed. R. Reynolds (London, 1951) 7.

³⁸ Verkruisje, “Gedrukt in seghwaer”, 34; For a different view, see the articles by De Bruin, Reinders and Stensland in this volume.

³⁹ For the difference between polemic and propaganda see Peacey, *Politicians*, 2.

is usually looked at quite carefully, but the collections of Tiele, Petit, Van der Wulp, Zijlstra, Rogge, Van Alphen and Van Someren are mostly bypassed. The erroneous idea exists that Knuttel covers just about everything.⁴⁰ If we look, however, at the total number of pamphlets that were published in 1672 – the year with the highest output of pamphlets in the history of the Dutch Republic – Knuttel only covers half of all publications.⁴¹

Political communication in the Dutch Republic

Political information was often spread by office holders (*regenten*) to a public of citizens. The importance of this form of political communication grew from the sixteenth century on, with the rise of the notion of the state as a body that could be seen separated from the people who filled the most important offices in that state. This led to a situation wherein office holders (including kings) could be held accountable for their policies – be it in a restricted form – making the need for political communication all the more pressing.⁴² Around the time that the Dutch Republic was starting to take shape in the sixteenth century it was considered quite common for governors to inform their subjects (citizens) about important decisions.⁴³ In the currently fashionable

⁴⁰ A. Munt, “The Impact of the Rampjaar on Dutch Golden Age Culture,” *Dutch Crossing* 21 (1997); Verkruijsse, “Gedruckt in seghwaer”; J. Stern, *Orangism in the Dutch Republic in Word and Image, 1650–75* (Manchester, 2010). Harline has made the assumption that one fourth of the issues is not duplicated in Knuttel. Harline, *Pamphlets*, 3.

⁴¹ From a body of 1604 pamphlets that were published in 1672, only 828 are to be found in the Knuttel catalogue. These numbers include reprints.

⁴² For an elaboration on this issue see R. von Friedeburg, “Introduction,” in *Murder and Monarchy. Regicide in Medieval and Early Modern Europe (c. 1300–1800)*, ed. R. von Friedeburg (Basingstoke, 2004), 1–32. See also: H. van Nierop, “Popular Participation in Politics in the Dutch Republic,” in *Resistance, Representation and Community*, ed. P. Blicke (Oxford, 1997); K. Schreiner, “Teilhab, Konsens und Autonomie. Leitbegriffe kommunaler Ordnung in der politischen Theorie des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit,” in *Theorien kommunaler Ordnung in Europa*, ed. P. Blicke (München, 1996).

⁴³ H. Dunthorne, “Anglo-Dutch Publishing during the Eighty Years’ War (1568–1648),” in *The Bookshop of the World*, ed. Duke et al.; R.N. Carew Hunt, “Some Pamphlets of the Revolt of the Netherlands against Spain,” *The English Historical Review* 44 (1929); A. Duke, “Dissident Propaganda and Political Organization at the Outbreak of the Revolt of the Netherlands,” in *Reformation, Revolt and Civil War in France and the Netherlands 1555–1585*, ed. P. Benedict (Amsterdam, 1999); Harline, *Pamphlets*; Geurts, *De Nederlandse Opstand in de pamfletten*; Van Gelderen, *The Political Thought*.

model of the rise of the public sphere this is called 'representative publicity'. Habermas argued that authorities used the tactic of shock and awe until the early eighteenth century. By covering political messages in layers of splendour and glory, all subjects were supposed to passively consume the (untranslated) message that was spread by their superiors.⁴⁴

This, of course, is a one-sided picture.⁴⁵ As long as there has been governmental political communication, there have been reactions by those governed. In the Dutch Republic, these reactions could take the form of political uprisings, but also, from an exceptionally early stage, these reactions were printed, creating a political culture that was based on a dialectical view of politics.⁴⁶ For this reason, Niek van Sas has described the pamphlet as "the typical workhorse of crisis politics".⁴⁷ In the early stages of the Dutch Revolt, for example, William of Orange and the rebels used pamphlets as a vehicle to get across their newly developing political ideology, to shape their identity and blacken the reputation of the Spaniards.⁴⁸

Importantly, political historians now also recognise that there is no simple dichotomy of government and public, in spite of what Habermas originally argued.⁴⁹ A strict horizontal interpretation of debates, juxtaposing elite and populace, is too constrictive. Indeed, since there was also debate within political regimes (witness the partisan ideological splits in England and the Dutch Republic) that filtered through to a

⁴⁴ Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*.

⁴⁵ Habermas himself admitted this later in: J. Habermas, "Further Reflections on the Public Sphere," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Calhoun (Cambridge, 1992). Brandon Dooley has rightly argued that it is all but certain that these readers believed what they read. B. Dooley, "News and Doubt in Early Modern Culture," in *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe*, ed. B. Dooley and S.A. Baron (London/New York, 2001), 276.

⁴⁶ Harline, *Pamphlets*, 228. Cf. Frijhoff and Spies, 1650; P. Knevel, "De politiek op straat. Over de vormen van stedelijk protest in de zeventiende eeuw," *Groniek* 31 (1997); M. Prak, "Burghers into Citizens. Urban and National Citizenship in the Netherlands during the Revolutionary Era (c.1800)," *Theory and Society* 26 (1997); H. van Nierop, "Private Interests, Public Policies. Petitions in the Dutch Republic," in *The Public and Private in Dutch Culture of the Golden Age*, ed. A.K. Wheelock and A. Seeff (Newark, 2000). According to Raymond, this explains why so many pamphlets are titled "An Answer to." Raymond, *Pamphlets*, 209.

⁴⁷ N. van Sas, "The Netherlands, 1750–1813," in *Press, Politics and the Public Sphere in Europe and North America 1760–1820*, ed. H. Barker and S. Burrows (Cambridge, 2002), 58.

⁴⁸ Duke, "Dissident propaganda", 115–132.

⁴⁹ I. Atherton, "The Press and Popular Political Opinion," in *A Companion to Stuart Britain*, ed. B. Coward (Malden, 2003).

wider public, debates also acquired a distinct vertical character. In fact, it must be concluded that the constellation of political debate was too complex to be captured in a simple model. Lake and Questier speak of “an ideologically, politically, and even institutionally variegated establishment”: Government factions fueled and utilised public debate also to muster support in internal power struggles.⁵⁰ This insight complicates the view of pamphlets as ‘propaganda’ or top-down indoctrination only.

The complex entanglement of politics and public debates is the main theme of what is now described as New Political History, a historiographical development denoting increased attention to the social and cultural context of the conduct of politics. Even if in the Dutch Republic the public was not able to influence politics directly, any policy was still conducted within a wider ideological, social and political context. Government policy both generated and was influenced by public debate. Postmodernist scholarship in particular has highlighted the cardinal significance of policy discourses. Since any policy needed to be verbalised, the relationship between discourse and politics is symbiotic; indeed it is hard to conceive of politics without making reference to discourse. A pamphlet is not a foreign policy document, but both are parts of wider integrated intertextual webs which are continuously shaping and reshaping policy ideas.⁵¹ All this hardly makes the relationship between pamphlets and politics straightforward, but it does invalidate the older political history’s dismissal of pamphlets and the strict focus on high politics and *realpolitik*.

The European experimental garden: The print industry

Compared to other states such as England and France, the Dutch Republic possessed some favourable circumstances that promoted the publishing industry. Above all, censorship was unsuccessful. Consequently, the Dutch Republic became a mass producer of illegal

⁵⁰ P. Lake and M. Questier, “Puritans, Papists, and the ‘Public Sphere’ in Early Modern England. The Edmund Campion Affair in Context,” *Journal of Modern History* 72:3 (2000): 591.

⁵¹ Cf. introduction of Lene Hansen, *Security as Practice. Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (Abingdon, 2006).

pamphlets and forbidden books. The relative press freedom also attracted many exiles and freethinkers to move to the Republic.⁵² In addition, the Dutch Republic was centrally placed between the large European countries, Moscow, the Levant and America, which made the Dutch Republic an information crossroads and storehouse. Furthermore, the Republic had a high rate of literacy and the paper-and-letter production was sophisticated. French paper mills ran on Dutch funds, while the presses at Oxford and Cambridge used Dutch letters. The Dutch created a new technique for paper manufacturing, which included a grinding bin that was called the 'Hollander'.⁵³ Not only did foreign producers and writers find it relatively easy to publish a forbidden book in the Dutch Republic, the result was most of the times superior in quality to the work of the printers at home. From these circumstances three important tendencies emerged in Dutch publishing: Competition, piracy and differentiation.

Competition was fierce among printers, booksellers, and perhaps even among writers who sold their services to the highest bidder.⁵⁴ Amsterdam, for example, counted more than a thousand printers and booksellers during the seventeenth century.⁵⁵ When news from another province came to Holland, several editions of the same story usually appeared, spread by different printers who hastily tried to be the first to bring their version to market.

All these different printers were not evenly located over the Republic. We will take the Year of Disaster, the year with one of the highest pamphlet outputs in Dutch history (1604 different titles) as an example, not because pamphleteering during this year was representative, but

⁵² *The Bookshop of the World*, ed. Duke et al.; Hoftijzer, *Engelse boekverkopers*, 5–10; H. van Nierop, "Censorship, Illicit Printing and the Revolt of the Netherlands," in *Too Mighty to be Free*, ed. Duke and Tamse (Zutphen, 1988); I. Weekhout, *Boekencensuur in de Noordelijke Nederlanden. Een verkennend onderzoek naar de vrijheid van drukpers gedurende de zeventiende eeuw* (The Hague, 1998).

⁵³ Hoftijzer, *Engelse boekverkopers*, 1–2; J.G. van Dillen, *Van Rijkdom en regenten. Handboek tot de economische en sociale geschiedenis van Nederland tijdens de Republiek* (The Hague, 1970), 406–407.

⁵⁴ P.G. Hoftijzer, "Between Mercury and Minerva. Dutch Printing Offices and Bookshops as Intermediaries in Seventeenth-century scholarly Communication," in *Forms of Communication in the Republic of Letters, 1600–1750*, ed. H. Bots and F. Waquet (Amsterdam/Maarssen, 1994), 125.

⁵⁵ P.G. Hoftijzer, *De Zeis in andermans koren. Over nadruk in Nederland tijdens de Republiek, Rede uitgesproken bij de aanvaarding van het ambt van bijzonder hoogleraar in de geschiedenis van de uitgeverij en boekhandel vanwege de Dr P.A. Tiele- Stichting aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam op 17 september 1993* (Amsterdam, 1993), 6.

because it shows us what was possible. In total 208 different printers were active in the entire Dutch Republic in 1672. Holland was by far the most important province in Dutch publishing. In general, during the seventeenth century, eighty per cent of all printers were located in this province.⁵⁶ In 1672, the province of origin is known for 526 pamphlets. Holland was responsible for 404 of these publications. Zeeland followed with 51 pamphlets, Utrecht had 31, Friesland 15, Overijssel 13, Groningen 10 and Gelderland 2. Publications from Holland stood out not only in quantity. According to contemporaries, the status and quality of publications from a city such as Deventer was inferior to publications from Holland.⁵⁷ The practical implication of this difference was that in the few cases where a pamphlet was published in another province, the second edition was mostly published in Holland.

Much in the same way that Holland monopolised printing in the Dutch Republic, Amsterdam monopolised printing in Holland.⁵⁸ Out of a national output of 100,000 titles in the seventeenth century, 60,000 were published by 1000 different printers in Amsterdam. Leiden, the city with the most important (and productive) university, came in second with 250 different printers. Rotterdam followed with 200, The Hague was fourth with 150.⁵⁹ Importantly, in nearly all other cities in the Republic, even in relatively small border towns such as Nijmegen, printers and booksellers could be found as well.⁶⁰

In 1672, 526 different pamphlets indicated their city of origin. Amsterdam had produced 211 of the total number, followed by The Hague (96), Middelburg (49), Rotterdam (31), and Utrecht (30). Leiden, the scholarly capital of the Dutch Republic, only came in 14th (out of 38 cities in total) with 5 known publications in 1672. Similar to Holland's position within Dutch printing, publications from Amsterdam appeared to have had something special that other

⁵⁶ Weekhout, *Boekencensuur*, 43. Cf. Frijhoff and Spies, 1650, 264–268; Groenveld, “The Mecca of Authors?,” in *Too Mighty to be Free*, ed. Duke and Tamse, 65–66.

⁵⁷ Weekhout, *Boekencensuur*, 49.

⁵⁸ Hoftijzer, *Engelse boekverkopers*, 35.

⁵⁹ M. Evers, H. van Mourik, E. Vercauteren and D. van Wingerden, “Lijst van Rotterdamse boekverkopers tot 1800 gebaseerd op de aantekeningen van H.C. Hazewinkel,” in *Rotterdam Bibliopolis. Een rondgang langs boekverkopers uit de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw*, ed. H. Bots, O.S. Lankhorst and C. Zevenbergen (Rotterdam, 1997), 485.

⁶⁰ Frijhoff and Spies, 1650, 268; Hoftijzer, “Between Mercury and Minerva,” 121; Verkruijsse, “De verspreiding van populaire literatuur”.

publications lacked, or as one of the many pamphleteers wrote “if it is not from Amsterdam, I think little of it”.⁶¹

All this competition within the Dutch publishing industry led to the widespread use of piracy, or as a pamphleteer called it, “that harmful plague of authors and printers”.⁶² The most obvious motive for publishing a pirated edition was financial benefit. According to the Amsterdam printer Jacobus van Egmont, piracy was necessary because otherwise, he “could not earn enough to survive”.⁶³ Pamphleteers had another argument for putting a pirated edition on the market. Books and other printed media were said to be too expensive, and by publishing a cheaper pirated edition, the pirate claimed that he was doing society a favour.⁶⁴ This argument was based less on justifying one’s own actions than we perhaps would assume. As Paul Hoftijzer has shown, the first two editions of Newton’s *Principia Mathematica* were too expensive and rare for the continent. Not until pirated prints appeared did Newton’s ideas become widely spread throughout Europe.⁶⁵ Authors creatively tried to put an end to piracy. Authors would, for example, sign all copies of the original edition of a pamphlet.⁶⁶

Besides competition and piracy, the abundance of printers and booksellers caused the different fields in the Dutch publishing trade to specialise early in its development.⁶⁷ Logically, specialisation and differentiation were mostly characteristics of the larger towns. Some towns could even be labelled specialised as a whole.⁶⁸ The Hague, being the centre of political news, was a real pamphlet town. Consequently, a reader in search of a publication had a variety of choices in the larger

⁶¹ Huysmans-Praetje, *Voorgesteld tot onderrechtingh, Hoe men sich in deze verwerden en murmurerige toestandt des tijds behoorden te dragen: En met eenen Om tot beter verstanrt des oorsaecks van de tegenwoordige bedroefden toestandt des tijds te komen. Tuschen Jacob, Klaes en Symon* (1672) Knuttel 10282, 9.

⁶² Quoted in Hoftijzer, *De Zeis in andermans koren*, 2–3.

⁶³ Hoftijzer, *De Zeis in andermans koren*, 7.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Hoftijzer, ‘*Rijk van Pallas*’, 6.

⁶⁶ Cf. *Waerachtigh Verhael, van ‘t gepasseerde In, ende ontrent der saecken, tusschen Willem Tichelaer, Mr. Chirurgyn tot Piershil. En Mr. Cornelis de Witt, Ruward van Putten. Nopende de conspiratie tegens sijn Hoogheyt den Heere Prince van Orangien* (1672) Knuttel 10206. Cf. Hoftijzer, *Engelse boekverkopers*, 35.

⁶⁷ P. Dijstelberge, “Ik wil dat er gelezen wordt. Boekgeschiedenis: analytische bibliografie, boekarcheologie,” in *Het lange leven van het pamflet*, ed. De Kruif, Meijer Drees and Salman, 49. Cf. Hoftijzer, *Engelse boekverkopers*, 37; A. van Mameren, “De gazophylace. Het drukkersconflict tussen Pieter van Waesberghe en Johannes Naeranus,” in *Rotterdam Bibliopolis*, ed. Bots, Lankhorst, and Zevenbergen, 42.

⁶⁸ Frijhoff and Spies, 1650, 271–273; Hoftijzer, *Engelse boekverkopers*, 19.

cities of the Dutch Republic. Most niche markets had their own publishers and their own booksellers. Publications about different religions, from Socinians to English Quakers, were to be found at different addresses. The same principle applied to the fields of physics, leisure and most importantly, politics.⁶⁹

From thought to pamphlet

Every pamphlet starts with a thought. It would be wrong to assume, however, that this thought was always the author's. Often, a bookseller functioned as a producer of a pamphlet. The bookseller would have an idea, for which he sought a writer and a printer separately. Bookseller Thomas van Hoorn, for example, employed printer Philips De Crouy to publish a work that had been written by the author Johan de Bye. This author was never obliged to meet (or know) the person who printed his work.⁷⁰ At other times, a printer would function as producer. *d'Ontroerde Leeuw*, a successful series of pamphlets that was published during the 1670s, was a project of printer Steven Swart, who found an author in Johan Gribbius. *d'Ontroerde Leeuw* was a pamphlet that provided a summary of recent events within the space of fewer than a hundred pages. Swart produced five versions of this successful formula between 1672 and 1675.⁷¹ Obviously, the author himself could also be the producer. When the Amsterdammer Volckert van de Velde wrote a pamphlet to slander his ex-wife who had betrayed him with another man, he found a printer who put "printed for the author" on the title page.⁷² Lastly, a producer could also be someone, or a collective of people, who needed a publication. This could be in the field of art, or leisure, but in this volume we concentrate on the field of politics.

⁶⁹ Hoftijzer, *Engelse boekverkopers*, 29–37; M. Keblusek, "The Exile Experience. Royalist and Anglican Book Culture in the Low Countries (1640–1660)," in *The Bookshop of the World*, ed. Duke et al., 152.

⁷⁰ In 't bedrukte Jaar 1672. Augustus 5. Naast den Onsterfelijken God. Sijn Hoogheid den Heere Wilhelmus Prince van Orangien, &c. Een Gebed in desen bedrukten tijd van Oorloog (1672) Petit 3850.

⁷¹ *D'Ontroerde Leeuw* (1672) Knuttel 10526. Cf. Hoftijzer, *Engelse boekverkopers*, 245.

⁷² *Copie van een Brief door Volckert van de Velde geschreven aen syn Huys-vrouw Anna Stoffelse, over de opnbare en schandelyke Citatie, of Indaginge door door [sic] haer publykelyk van 't Stadhuis tot Amsterdam afkundigen; om hem te Faamrooven door leugens en lasteringen. Gelijk in dezen Brief kan gezien worden* (1672) Petit 3989.

So far this analysis leaves one important question unanswered: Why would anyone write, print, distribute or sell a pamphlet? The motivations for putting a printed publication on the market were the same for producers, writers, printers and sellers of pamphlets: Ideological and commercial.⁷³ In practice the distinction between these motivations was often flexible. Pamphleteers could write for money, and still remain loyal to a patron or committed to a cause, while people who were ideologically committed could still make a decent living from their beliefs.⁷⁴

In the Dutch Republic during the seventeenth century, publishing was serious business. The success of a publication was measured not only by the satisfaction of a patron or damage done to a (political) adversary, but also by the revenue it produced. People who invested in a publication had to earn back their money. Therefore, it is obvious that printers, who invested in printing equipment, and booksellers, who often invested in a shop, had commercial motivations to engage in publishing. In 1618, a publication about the life of Jesus Christ was printed by Jasper Tournay from Gouda in an edition of five hundred. Huygh Syvertsz, a carpenter and a trader in wood, had commissioned the work and paid the printer seventy guilders.⁷⁵ According to Harline, booksellers had a nose for commerce – he called it a mania – especially as sellers of news stories.⁷⁶

More complicated than the situation of the men who had to earn back their investments, was that of the paid writer. In general we can say that during the early modern period, a shift can be seen from a situation wherein authors were part of a patron's clientele and were paid, if at all, by protection, the promise of long-term commitment, minor offices or occasionally money, to the situation wherein authors wrote for an anonymous public and expected to get paid for every single publication by a publisher who profited from the work.⁷⁷ This shift coincided with the advent of an anonymous public that had to be pleased in addition to – or instead of – the patron or the producer. The seventeenth century saw much of this transition, as this was the time that the market for popular political publications grew spectacularly in

⁷³ Cf. Dijstelberge, "Ik wil dat er gelezen wordt", 48.

⁷⁴ Raymond, *Pamphlets*, 56; Peacey, *Politicians*, 273–277.

⁷⁵ Weekhout, *Boekencensuur*, 176.

⁷⁶ Harline, *Pamphlets*, 78.

⁷⁷ Raymond, *Pamphlets*, 57; Sharpe and Zwicker, "Introduction" in *Refiguring Revolutions*, ed. Sharpe and Zwicker, 8; Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture*, 216.

urban areas.⁷⁸ This shift meant a different approach to writing. The author who sought to please a patron sought compensation (in kind) after publication, for example by adding a dedication to his book. The author who sought to please an anonymous audience, however, knew that he was going to be paid before the publication was brought on the market, or that he was paid in any case regardless of the opinion of one specific reader. Therefore, it is not surprising that pamphlets were rarely dedicated to an individual.⁷⁹

Arguing against those who stress the commercial motivation for pamphlet writers, Craig Harline has claimed that “most authors of pamphlets were devoted to a particular cause, and wrote primarily out of conviction, not hopes of profits”.⁸⁰ Since we have learned, however, that authors who expected payment after publication of their work often sought patronage, and that authors who expected to be paid upfront wrote to please an unknown audience (and their success was measured in terms of the market), we can safely assume that even ideologically motivated authors were forced to think commercially. Authors had to please a public, whether this public was made up of one powerful patron, or a multitude of anonymous readers. The argument of the publication had to be sold.⁸¹

By examining the shift from patron to public, we can omit the discussion over whether seventeenth-century pamphleteers were autonomous writers who expressed what they wanted to say to the public or whether pamphlet content was determined by patrons/producers who strictly instructed authors. In reality, authors could write for money, or out of ideological commitment, or both. Authors who wrote popular propaganda were at times forced to defend an argument that they probably did not support. Authors who wrote from an ideological point of view, however, also had to sell their publication to

⁷⁸ Raymond, *Pamphlets*, 59–94.

⁷⁹ Harline, *Pamphlets*, 92–94; J.R. Censer and J.D. Popkin, “Historians and the Press” in *Press and Politics in Pre-Revolutionary France*, ed. Censer and Popkin, 1–23, 20.

⁸⁰ Harline, *Pamphlets*, 105.

⁸¹ Harline, *Pamphlets*, 105; Peacey, *Politicians*, 16; G.H. Janssen, “Dutch Clientelism and News Networks in Public and Private Spheres. The Case of Stadholder William Frederick (1613–1664),” in *News and Politics in Early Modern Europe (1500–1800)*, ed. Koopmans; Mameren, “De gazophylace”; P. Thissen, *Werk, netwerk en letterwerk van de familie Van Hoogstraten in de zeventiende eeuw. Sociaal-economische en sociaal-culturele achtergronden van geletterden in de Republiek* (Amsterdam/Maarssen, 1994); Dijstelberge, “Ik wil dat er gelezen wordt”, 51–52.

be successful. The market was thus of huge importance for pamphleteering. Furthermore, it is important to note that authors could fall in, or out of, grace with their patrons or producers as time went by. This could happen intentionally on the author's part, but it could also occur against the author's will. Even more importantly, however, authors could retain a degree of independence while acting as propagandists. There were limits to what individuals would give up for money.⁸²

Who wrote pamphlets?

It is hard to make any kind of generalisation about the authors of pamphlets. Of the 1605 pamphlets written in 1672, 996 were original productions, the other 609 were reprints. Of these 996 pamphlets, a little more than half were published anonymously (553 pamphlets). There could be several reasons for anonymous publication. Obviously, authors concealed their identity to evade censorship and avoid prosecution. Authors, however, also remained anonymous for more subtle reasons: To be able to argue different, perhaps even opposite, opinions at a later time, for example, which supports the claim that paid authors could write for both sides of an ideological struggle.⁸³ Of the remaining 443 pamphlets, 121 were published under a pseudonym. This leaves us with 322 pamphlets that were written by a known author. These 322 pamphlets were written by 209 different authors. Despite the tendency to publish anonymously, some pamphleteers did write their names on their publication. From these names, we can safely conclude that pamphleteering encompassed all social, political, religious and economic positions within Dutch society. We can also see, however, that some groups seem to have been particularly overrepresented in writing pamphlets, while other groups were represented by exception. The first conclusion we can take considering pamphleteers concerns gender. Pamphlets were generally written by male authors. Only two women are known to have produced pamphlets during 1672, Annetje Dirckx and Katarina Lescailje.⁸⁴

⁸² Hoftijzer, *Engelse boekverkopers*, 76–77; Peacey, *Politicians*, 277–288.

⁸³ Dijkstra, "Ik wil dat er gelezen wordt", 51–52.

⁸⁴ *Wonderlijke Doot van Jan de Wit, en Ruwaert van Putten* (1672) Tiele 6116; *Op het Vertrek van den doorluchtighsten Vorst Zyn Hoogheit Wilhemde Derde, Prince van Oranje, Grave van Nassou, &c. Stadthouder, Capiteyne en Admiraal Generaal der Vereenighde Nederlanden, &c* (1672) Tiele 6217.

Since pamphleteering was at times a political undertaking, it must not surprise us that politicians wrote many pamphlets in many different forms. The seven writers with the most publications in 1672 were all writing for a governmental body or individual. The Prince of Orange took first place with twenty-nine different publications in 1672, followed at some distance by the French king Louis XIV, who produced eleven pamphlets. Simon van Beaumont, who wrote – just like his brother Herbert – for the States of Holland, produced ten pamphlets. Surprisingly, John de Witt, who was subjected to the most vicious pamphlet campaigns during the year, published ‘only’ three pamphlets himself. Moreover, Pieter de la Court and Johan Uytenhage de Mist, the men who are believed to have written the bulk of True Freedom propaganda during the 1660s, did not write one single pamphlet during the Year of Disaster. Besides publishing vast amounts of political propaganda, *regenten*, as Dutch magistrates were called, at times engaged in pamphleteering for personal reasons. Ferdinandus Gruiwardt was a regent from Zeeland, but when he addressed his audience, he was speaking to his “fellow citizens”. The content of his pamphlet was entirely personal. Gruiwardt tried to convince his audience to help him get the man who had raped his daughter arrested.⁸⁵

Printers

Once an idea had been turned into a text by an author, it had to be printed. At the print shop, the printer needed to assess whether the publication was – ideologically or financially – attractive. Mostly, financing a pamphlet was not an insurmountable problem, since the production cost of pamphlets was relatively low. Because of the fast sales, pamphlets were also a commodity with a low risk. Producing a pamphlet in an edition of two hundred would cost about six to eight guilders. This was, however, a tiny edition. An average print run of a pamphlet lay somewhere between 500 and 1500 copies.⁸⁶ A pamphlet

⁸⁵ *Index van de Voorgaende Deductie, Ampleatie en Appendix, Opgesteld by Ferdinandus Gruiwardt, Der Medicinen Doctor en Practizijn, regeerende Schepen en Raedt der Stadt Goes; Vervat in dese drie volgende Missiven; Waer in te sien en te tasten is een overstromenden Vloedt van schrickelijcke dreygementen Gods over onse Hoofstadt en Vaderlijke Provincie* (1672) Knuttel 10638a.

⁸⁶ Print runs were usually not below 250, because lower runs were commercially not viable, although Marika Keblusek has found a pamphlet that was printed in a run of 100 copies. M. Keblusek, “Nieuwsvoorziening in de Republiek. De Engelse

could produce as much as twenty guilders in revenue. Once a printer had decided to print the content, many different specialised labourers were needed such as type-founders, type-setters, correctors, paper traders, parchment makers, bookbinders, shop personnel and illustrators. These labourers were often not on a regular payroll, but were hired for parts of the day, so the turnover in the Dutch publishing industry was high.⁸⁷

Usually, printers worked on several products at one time. Joad Raymond has claimed that pamphlets were usually printed in between other, more time-consuming projects (books), which led him to conclude that printing a pamphlet took about three days. During times of crisis, however, pamphlets could become more important than books and the priority of the publications changed. For example, the book *A Vindication of the Answer tot the Humble Remonstrance, from the Unjust Imputations of Frivolousness and Falsehood*, printed in 1641 in England, was over 230 pages in length. Its printer apologised that “the crouding in of so many little Pamphlets into the Press hath for many weeks detained this Book, to the great grief of the Authors”.⁸⁸

After a pamphlet had been printed, the production was not yet completed. The paper had to be pressed for several hours, during which time the ink dried into the paper. This procedure meant that the weather could influence the printing process. During a hard winter, presses could not be used, because the ink would freeze and the paper would not dry. After the pamphlet had been finished, it was not bound, but the pages were sewn together with two stitches after the purchase.⁸⁹

All in all, pamphlets were meant to be produced as fast as possible. The most important change in pamphleteering during the seventeenth

burgeroorlog in Haagse drukken,” in *Tekens en teksten. Cultuur, communicatie en maatschappelijke veranderingen vanaf de late middeleeuwen*, ed. A. Knotter, H. Klever and F. van Vree (Amsterdam, 1992), 64. According to Harline, pamphlets were printed in runs of 1000 to 1250 copies. Harline, *Pamphlets*, 21. Harline, however, took the large print shop of printer Blaue to be typical, which it was most probably not. In general, print runs seem to have varied between 500 and 1500. Cf. Raymond, *Pamphlets*, 80.

⁸⁷ Dijstelberge, “Ik wil dat er gelezen wordt,” 50; Raymond, *Pamphlets*, 73; Hoftijzer, *Engelse boekverkopers*, 71–73; O. Lankhorst, *Reinier Leers, uitgever en boekverkooper te Rotterdam (1654–1714)* (Amsterdam, 1983), 28–32; H. van Mourik and E. Vercauteren, “Het boekverkopersgilde in Rotterdam,” in *Rotterdam Bibliopolis*, ed. Bots, Lankhorst, and Zevenbergen, 464.

⁸⁸ Quoted in Raymond, *Pamphlets*, 80, 210.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 81–82.

century is the growing speed of the production process. Where Harline could claim with reason that a pamphlet could be delayed for a month or two during the first decades of the century, which “did little to destroy a pamphlet’s timeliness”, in the late seventeenth century pamphlets were produced, sold and read within days. A slower production process could destroy a pamphlet’s objective, namely to react to other publications and influence or shape ideas of a public that was flooded with publications. In an ideal situation, setting and printing a pamphlet of eight to twelve pages took a couple of hours. If a text was handed in at a printer in the morning, the pamphlet could be ready for sale in the afternoon.⁹⁰ In pamphlets, many references were made to the speed of news and publications. These references can be read as rhetorical tricks to lure the reader into a mode of urgency, but in general, they also indicate that a pamphlet was produced within a timeframe of hours, not days. A character in a printed dialogue told his fellow debaters, for example, that their conversation would probably “appear in print before the night is over”.⁹¹

From printer to reader

A pamphlet that had been printed and distributed to printers in other cities was a “stone that has been thrown, out of [a printer’s] power”.⁹² Printer and pamphlet had indeed most of the time said their last good-byes after the pamphlet had rolled from the presses. The distribution of pamphlets was mostly the field of professional booksellers. These booksellers could be found in their bookstores.⁹³ However, pamphlets were also sold through itinerant booksellers or travelling pedlars. Obviously these men, who carried their commodities on their back, sold small publications such as pamphlets, almanacs and songs, instead of heavy atlases or leather bound bibles. Pedlars sold their stock to (and in) coffeehouses, inns and bars, where they were often nailed to the wall for everyone to read.⁹⁴ Harmanus de Koning from Amsterdam

⁹⁰ Harline, *Pamphlets*, 92–93; Dijstelberge, “Ik wil dat er gelezen wordt,” 50.

⁹¹ *Trits van Verstanden* (1672) Knuttel 10373.

⁹² Harline, *Pamphlets*, 80.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 80–88; J. Salman, “Het nieuws op straat. Actueel drukwerk in het vroeg-moderne distributienetwerk,” in *Het lange leven van het pamflet*, ed. De Kruif, Meijer Drees and Salman.

⁹⁴ Salman, “Het nieuws op straat”, in *Het lange leven van het pamflet*, ed. De Kruif, Meijer Drees and Salman, 59.

was one of these pedlars. He described how he got his hands on several publications in 1747 and “went to the coffeehouses with two colleagues, and there we sold our goods”.⁹⁵ People who tried to sell pamphlets on the street and in crowded places had to promote their product. One way was to yell or, more likely, sing part of the pamphlet. A downside to this strategy was that the seller exposed himself to authorities.⁹⁶ These pedlars did not necessarily receive their publications from bookstores. Often they received their pamphlets directly from politicians who had produced the pamphlet.⁹⁷ In general, people who sold pamphlets from door to door or at markets had a bad name. One pamphleteer accused another printer of having his pamphlets sold by “vagabonds and hoboos”.⁹⁸ Despite this bad name, the distribution structure of bookstores and pedlars made sure that the selling of publications on Dutch streets could be seen and heard all over the Republic. An eyewitness described such a scene in 1798: “Here stood a singer, surrounded by a crowd of peasants and their wives to whom he cried out his miserable ‘rags’ at the highest volume possible; he sold much of his stock, despite them containing nothing but suspect lies”.⁹⁹

Audience

The meaning of a text could change with every step of the production process, but this change was at times also limited.¹⁰⁰ One of the most important of these boundaries was that all the participants in the establishment of the meaning of a text, the producer, writer, printer, book-seller, reader and subsequent audiences, were part of ‘the political nation’; by debating politics, they confirmed their membership in this community. Interpreting a political text thus meant performing a

⁹⁵ Quoted in *ibid.*

⁹⁶ Sharpe, “Introduction”, 5; Salman, “Het nieuws op straat,” in *Het lange leven van het pamflet*, ed. De Kruif, Meijer Drees and Salman, 59–66.

⁹⁷ Harline, *Pamphlets*, 88. Cf. R. Harms, “Handel in Letteren. Ambulante handel in actueel drukwerk in zeventiende-eeuws Amsterdam,” *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 23:2 (2007).

⁹⁸ *Oprechte Vermeerderde Brillen* (1672) Knuttel 10488, 2.

⁹⁹ Quoted in G. Rooijackers, “Opereren op het snijpunt van culturen. Middelaars en media in Zuid-Nederland,” in *Cultuur en maatschappij in Nederland 1500–1850*, ed. P. te Boekhorst, P. Burke and W. Frijhoff (Meppel/Amsterdam/Heerlen, 1992), 268.

¹⁰⁰ Sharpe and Zwicker, “Introduction,” in *Refiguring Revolutions*, ed. Sharpe and Zwicker, 9–10; Watt, *Cheap Print*, 4; Raymond, *Pamphlets*, 55.

political act. Thus, the audience of pamphlets resembled Benedict Anderson's imagined community.¹⁰¹ The advent of this (collective) political audience was a consequence of literacy, commercial expansion of the press, the formation of some kind of national community, and the nearness of the public.¹⁰² So, from the start it was clear that a reader interpreted publications in his or her own specific way, but also that these interpretations were limited by the unwritten rules of the (imagined) political community that these readers belonged to. Important steps have been taken in this area. It has been recognised, for example, that pamphlets can be meaningful events themselves.¹⁰³

There is another important comment to be made about the pamphlet audience. Historians have attributed a multiplier effect to these publications. In short, the multiplier effect means that a pamphlet was read or heard by more people than the person who had bought it. In general, a multiplier between five and fifty is applied to pamphlets.¹⁰⁴ This multiplying of the audience was a consequence of several practices. Firstly, pamphlets were not only read privately by individuals, they were also read aloud. In harbours, markets, inns and on boats, people could hear pamphlets. Marika Koblusek has argued that people who were illiterate or poor could be included in this way.¹⁰⁵ The pedlar Hendrick Dercks was, for example, arrested in Zwolle in 1671 at the Saturday-market for singing and selling a "filthy pasquil".¹⁰⁶ Pamphleteers knew about this custom. The author of *Bondigh en Waerachtig Verhael* wrote: "I leave the judgement with the reader or hearer [emphasis added] of this publication".¹⁰⁷

¹⁰¹ For the concept of the imagined community see B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London/New York, 1991).

¹⁰² Cf. Baker, "Politics and Public Opinion under the Old Regime", 212–213.

¹⁰³ M. Mendle, "News and the Pamphlet Culture of mid-seventeenth-century England," in *The Politics of Information*, ed. Dooley and Baron, 58.

¹⁰⁴ Gibbs argued that historians agree on the presence of the multiplier effect, but not on the factor. Gibbs, "Press and Public Opinion," in *Liberty Secured?*, ed. Jones, 28. Craig Harline has claimed that every copy was read in average by five different people. Harline, *Pamphlets*, 21. Most historians have used a multiplier between 5 and 50, which Guido de Bruin has qualified as probable but also as "a complete shot in the dark". G. de Bruin, *Geheimhouding en verraad. De geheimhouding van staatszaken ten tijde van de Republiek (1600-1750)* (The Hague, 1991), 82.

¹⁰⁵ Koblusek, "Nieuwsvoorziening in de Republiek," in *Tekens en teksten*, ed. Knotter, Klever and Van Vree, 60.

¹⁰⁶ Quoted in Salman, "Het nieuws op straat," in *Het lange leven van het pamflet*, ed. De Kruif, Meijer Drees and Salman, 63.

¹⁰⁷ *Bondigh Verhael* (1672) Knuttel 10045, 8.

A second cause of ‘the multiplier effect’ was the fact that pamphlets were often purchased and resold, rented out or passed along in wills.¹⁰⁸ While limited, there exists some evidence on pamphlets as part of inheritances.¹⁰⁹ In the archives of the Rotterdam family van Teylingen, for example, many pamphlets can be found. Although it is not precisely clear who collected these pamphlets or why, it is clear that the pamphlets that can be found in the archive were considered important in their day and were consequently collected and passed on within the family.¹¹⁰ A third reason to accept the multiplier effect within pamphleteering was the fact that pamphlets were abundantly copied. At the end of pamphlets, at times there would even be an assignment for readers, printers or distributors: “cito overschryven” (“copy quickly”).¹¹¹ Lastly, the content of pamphlets was multiplied by intermediaries, such as preachers and politicians, but also through everyday conversations, for example, at the marketplace. The fact that the message in pamphlets was at times ‘translated’ before it reached the audience brings us to the most difficult part about audiences. The person on the receiving end, the reader, namely also changed the meaning of the message by interpreting the text in his own specific way, and to make matters worse, after the alteration, he would normally pass this changed message on to other people, who might even have read the pamphlet themselves.¹¹² We have, in short, come to realise that readers changed the meaning of texts. According to Joad Raymond, the early modern reader is now perceived to be “cautious and intentionous, sophisticated and capable of having an interpretive strategy”.¹¹³ The problem is that in general, we know very little about how these readers precisely interpreted or reacted to what they read or heard.¹¹⁴ We should think of the audience

¹⁰⁸ Sawyer, *Printed Poison*, 68–71; Gibbs, “Press and Public Opinion,” in *Liberty Secured?*, ed. Jones, 28.

¹⁰⁹ Halasz, *The Marketplace of Print*.

¹¹⁰ Gemeentearchief Rotterdam (GAR), 37.01, 81 (Van Teylingen).

¹¹¹ *Missive Geschreven uyt het Leger leggende bij de Gouderwelfse Sluys* (1672) Petit 3831.

¹¹² Sawyer, *Printed Poison*, 69; Rooijackers, “Opereren op het snijpunt van culturen”, 10.

¹¹³ J. Raymond, “Irrational, Impractical and Unprofitable. Reading the News in Seventeenth-Century,” in *Writing Readers in Early Modern England*, ed. Sharpe and Zwicker (Cambridge, 2002), 185. Cf. *The Politics of Information*, ed. Dooley and Baron, 282.

¹¹⁴ Harris, “Propaganda and Public Opinion,” in *Media and Revolution*, ed. Popkin, 49. Cf. J. Pollmann, *Religious Choice in the Dutch Republic. The Reformation of Arnoldus Buchelius (1565–1641)* (Manchester/New York, 1999); Van Otegem, “Tijd, snelheid, afstand”, 60; Sharpe, “Introduction”, 1.

of pamphlets, whether they read a pamphlet, discussed a pamphlet, or interpreted an interpretation of a pamphlet, as the final determining factor in the meaning of a text.

Every essay in this collection takes a different perspective on the relationship between politics and pamphlets. Pamphlets are studied here as conveyers of political thought, as rhetorical weapons and as carriers of public opinion. The political force of the pamphlet is analysed by looking at different forms, different places and different times. If one term binds these essays together, it must be 'impact'. What kind of impact did the pamphlets that appeared at certain times have on people and events? And how did these in turn impact pamphlets? That is the central question of this book.

The volume includes an introductory chapter by Craig Harline, who paved the way for the use of pamphlets in historical research nearly three decades ago. For a more detailed description of the contents of the articles we refer to Craig Harline's introductory chapter. The volume itself consists of three sections. The first regards the pamphlet and its function. What did it mean to publish a pamphlet? Should we see pamphlets as the products of hired pens who wrote propaganda, or can we find the 'real' opinion of an author in commentaries on political events? What was the relationship between public opinion and governmental policy? Should a printed petition be seen as a collective effort by a group of citizens, or were these sorts of publications clever rhetorical schemes by rival political groups? If we can assert any of these pamphlet functions, can we perhaps distinguish diachronical developments or changes? Did its function change under influence of changed circumstances and if so, how and why? In this section Roeland Harms, Guido de Bruin and Michel Reinders analyse the function of the pamphlet between the 1650s and 1680s.

Too often pamphlets have been regarded as reflecting the opinion of an author or even a public's opinion. But one should not focus only on the actual contents of political writings, but also on the author's intention in writing and publishing his piece. Moreover, rather than merely communicating information or reflecting on events, sometimes pamphlets themselves actually influenced or initiated political events. The purpose of the second panel, with contributions by Jill Stern, David Onnekink and Koen Stapelbroek, will be to establish the role of pamphlets as historical actors.

Pamphlets were not the only medium in which political debates took place. It can be argued that the extent to which the political messages in pamphlets were able to take hold among the intended public,

depended partly on the interplay between different forms of communication. Seen in this light, how do we re-evaluate the exact role of pamphlets in the wider political debate and their effects on the public? In the third section, Femke Deen and Monica Stensland explore the interplay between printed pamphlets and other media, such as Joyous Entries and handwritten letters.

RETURN TO THE LAND OF BLUE LITTLE BOOKS

Craig Harline

This new and stimulating volume reminded me forcefully of why some twenty-five years ago I too spent a lot of energy and time trying to make sense of Dutch pamphlets: They are mercifully abundant, delightfully colourful, regularly revealing and always a little mysterious.

I had that impression when I first laid eyes on a pamphlet, as a graduate student, in the famous reading room of the New York Public Library, which was also the first time that I laid eyes on seventeenth-century Dutch. I had the same impression when I later saw even higher piles of pamphlets in Dutch libraries and archives, and I had it once again this past week when leafing through a few old photocopies I still have of my favourite pamphlets. They pull you in with their memorable language, their cleverness, their passion, and at least in the dialogues, their sometimes hilarious characters. I decided soon after that first encounter to write about pamphlets, not so much to set a research agenda but simply because I liked reading them, and suspected that this alone would go far toward helping me find some pleasure amidst the rigours of writing a dissertation.

Of course not all pamphlets were equally captivating. Some were unbearably long, or relentlessly dull, and some of the polemic was numbingly tedious – all because a pamphlet was often impenetrable. Not only words but entire topics and allusions were lost on me, as they would be on even most Dutch people today. Then, the things I most wanted to know about – the life of a pamphlet in its own context, and the identities of the people behind pamphlets – were, more often than not, elusive.

The identities of a good number of characters involved in the world of early modern pamphleteering will probably never be solved, but this present volume goes far – farther than my own book did – toward illuminating how pamphlets functioned in their time, or, as various authors put it, how they were “actors” in early modern Dutch society. More than ever, these essays show more clearly than ever that pamphlets are more than artifacts containing illustrative quotations for scholars, but instead a historical phenomenon in their own right.

Many of the mysteries surrounding the contemporary place of pamphlets remain difficult to crack. It is still hard, beyond rare instances, to speak with precision about the number of sales, the number of readers and listeners, the social rank of the audience, how much pamphlets cost, and, especially, how great their impact was. The rather tiresome discussion over just exactly how to define a pamphlet persists too, particularly since the word was not used by the Dutch themselves.

But again these articles make impressive progress, especially in offering numerous provocative examples of how to assess the all-important question of impact. Many go about this by looking for information in a wide variety of sources besides the pamphlets themselves. Jill Stern's creative linking of a French account of assassination in 1617 to Dutch pamphlets of 1672 that urged a similar fate for the De Witt brothers, shows enough eerie similarities between the two events to make you believe that there really is a connection between what people read and how they behaved – despite her warnings that such a connection always remains difficult to establish. Koen Stapelbroek looks in, of all places, the State Archives of Turin, to help explain how pamphlet debates in the Republic around 1779, over relations with England, were shaped heavily by similar debates in 1741: Pamphlets clearly influenced that debate, they did not merely record or reflect it.

Michel Reinders too examines additional sources to show how the supposedly closed and public-ignoring regime of the 1670s and 80s in fact displayed more concern for public opinion than arguably any regime before it, including the supposedly open regime of De Witt: More pamphlets were produced during the 1670s and 1680s than in previous decades, and an unprecedented number of these came from the regime itself, showing more specifically and convincingly than I did the belief of rulers in the impact of their own official pamphlets as well as of the pamphlets which they countered: In this case, better understanding of pamphlets and related sources has led to better understanding of domestic politics in the period, reinforcing that they were not merely literary ornaments for historians but actors themselves. Roeland Harms similarly demonstrates through various sources the significant attention paid to public opinion by William Frederick, who tried to stir people to his cause by publishing an array of little booklets. Monica Stensland, however, by examining diaries and correspondence and state papers, shows that at least in an earlier period rulers seemed to be less concerned, for most pamphlets about the truce

with Spain in 1609 ran quite contrary to what was being decided in private in the States General.

David Onnekink thoughtfully addresses the mystery of impact by looking in new ways at the internal evidence of pamphlets. Specifically, he applies literary and political theories to dissecting one of the most famous pamphlets of the 1680s, the *Declaration* of William III, justifying his invasion of England. The publication figure of 60,000 was impressive enough, but even more impressive here is Onnekink's demonstration of the pamphlet's numerous drafts, which reveal much about the author's perceptions of the pamphlet's likely impact. If impact is always one of the big mysteries around pamphleteering, composition is another, and Onnekink offers insight into both. Guido de Bruin uses an imaginative and sophisticated approach to assessing impact by looking at internal evidence of pamphlets during key moments of debate, nuanced quantitative trends, and the contents of newsletters over many years, yielding helpful and highly suggestive insights.

Roeland Harms tackles the mystery of impact by showing more forcefully than ever that the profit motive must be considered: The publication of a pamphlet was not an act of public service but of making a living – certainly a fact too often forgotten by historians who encounter a pamphlet in an archive 300 years after the fact and regard it only as a source. Historians often acknowledge the desire for profit, but rarely is there firm data available on the matter: Harms has found a revealing judicial source, and looks at the content of pamphlets more carefully than usual to show that booksellers expected to make money from them. And Femke Deen demonstrates in an article about the impact and spread of handwritten propaganda more details about how pamphlets might have been distributed as well. Deen and other contributors also rightly remind historians that in the effort to define pamphlets historians sometimes needlessly distinguish among genres of propaganda that are essentially the same. In other words, it is a bit arbitrary to study merely pamphlets when so many other media in the political arena – broadsheets, songs, even letters and sermons – were all trying to do much the same thing: Persuade the public.

In short, the authors have answered more precisely than I did why pamphlets mattered, and what function they served in their own time. They even do so without all the excruciating statistical examples which seemed so important to me when I was writing. When statistics are used here, as by Harms and De Bruin, they are used wisely and

judiciously, without the quantitative torture that was trendy thirty years ago. All in all, the authors should be congratulated for making the little blue books more interesting, accessible, and appealing than ever – even more than I remember them.

Part I

The Pamphlet and its Function

THIEVERY OF LITERATURE. CONSEQUENCES OF THE INTERACTION BETWEEN POLITICS AND COMMERCE FOR THE FORM AND CONTENT OF PAMPHLETS

Roeland Harms

Introduction

In 1650 the Dutch Republic was flooded with pamphlets related to the political conflict between the Stadtholder William II and the city of Amsterdam. Traditionally, these pamphlets have been considered merely as reactions to the conflict.¹ However, the enormous numbers of pamphlets that accompanied the quarrel cannot be regarded only as a consequence of the political events: They also contributed to and formed part of the conflict.

Pamphlets have long been neglected as a central object of study by both historians and literary historians.² Only recently have historians started to focus on the effects of pamphlets on the political process during moments of crisis.³ At the same time, literary historians have analysed the rhetorical strategies used by authors, thereby revealing the ways in which pamphleteers tried to convince readers of a certain

¹ S. Groenveld, *De Prins voor Amsterdam. Reacties uit pamfletten op de aanslag van 1650* (Bussum, 1967).

² The most important exceptions for Dutch pamphlets are the studies of P.A.M. Geurts, *De Nederlandse opstand in de pamfletten 1566–1584* (Nijmegen, 1956) and C. E. Harline, *Pamphlets, Printing and Political Culture in the early Dutch Republic* (Dordrecht, 1987).

³ The most recent example for the Dutch Republic is Michel Reinders' dissertation, in which the political events of 1672 have been rewritten by taking into account the effects pamphlets had on politics. M. Reinders, "Printed Pandemonium. The Power of the Public and the Market for Popular Political Publications in the Early Modern Dutch Republic" (PhD diss., Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2008). Earlier, David Zaret took a similar approach in examining printed petitions in England. He stated: "(...) the 'invention' of public opinion as a political force occurred well before the Enlightenment, in a more popular social milieu, a consequence not of theoretical principles but of practical developments that flowed from the impact of printing on traditional forms of political communications." D. Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture. Printing, Petitions, and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Princeton, 2000), 6.

point of view.⁴ This shift in the two disciplines is due to the now widely accepted post-revisionist approach in historical research, in which literature is considered not only as something that represents (or misrepresents) cultural reality. Instead, literature (including the news pamphlet) partly shapes cultural discourse as well.⁵

It is remarkable that only a few scholars have connected the recently developed theoretical approaches in both literary studies and history to much older debates in the fields of media studies and book history about the effects of media. Marshall McLuhan made his famous statement ('the medium is the message') back in 1964.⁶ Whereas his radical ideas were criticised heavily in his time, the effects of the new media can no longer be neglected and have led to an academic revival of his statements.⁷ Within the field of book history, Elisabeth Eisenstein and Walter Ong tried to adopt the ideas of McLuhan to research on early modern books, showing the revolutionary impact of the printing press on society as a whole.⁸ Their hypotheses about media and society show

⁴ For England, see J. Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2003). For the Dutch Republic, see M. Meijer Drees, "Goed voor de ogen. Brilmetaforiek in vroegmoderne pamfletten," in *Het lange leven van het pamflet. Boekhistorische, iconografische, literaire en politieke aspecten van pamfletten 1600–1900*, ed. J. de Kruif, M. Meijer Drees and J. Salman (Hilversum, 2006), 129–142; C. Dingemanse, *Rap van tong, scherp van pen. Literaire discussiecultuur in Nederlandse praatjespamfletten (circa 1600–1750)* (Hilversum, 2008); J. Vrieler, *Het poëtisch accent. Drie literaire genres in zeventiende-eeuwse Nederlandse pamfletten* (Hilversum, 2007).

⁵ See for example J. Pieters and H. Vandevoorde, "De armoede van de praktijk. Over de moeizame relatie tussen literatuuronderzoek en cultuurgeschiedenis," *Feit en Fictie* 4 (2003); K. Sharpe and P. Lake, "Introduction," in *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, ed. K. Sharpe and P. Lake (Houndmills, 1994); J. Raymond, "Introduction. Networks, Communication, Practice," in *News Networks in Seventeenth-Century Britain and Europe*, ed. J. Raymond (Abingdon/New York, 2006); J. K. Sawyer, *Printed Poison. Pamphlet Propaganda, Faction Politics, and the Public Sphere in early Seventeenth-Century France* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/Oxford, 1990); J. Peacey, *Politicians and Pamphleteers. Propaganda during the English Civil Wars and Interregnum* (Aldershot, 2004); D. Freist, *Governed by Opinion. Politics, Religion and the Dynamics of Communication in Stuart London 1637–1645* (London/New York, 1997); J. Raymond, "The Newspaper, Public Opinion, and the Public Sphere in the Seventeenth Century," in *News, Newspapers, and Society in Early Modern Britain*, ed. J. Raymond (London, 1999).

⁶ M. McLuhan, *Understanding Media. The Extensions of Man* (London, 1964). For a good explanation of his ideas about media, see also: McLuhan, *Forward through the Rearview Mirror*, ed. P. Benedetti and N. DeHart (Cambridge, 1996).

⁷ For criticism on McLuhan's ideas about media, see M. Lister et al., *New Media. A Critical Introduction* (London/New York, 2003), 72–96.

⁸ E. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change. Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1979); W.J. Ong,

striking similarities with the now widely accepted assumption in the fields of history and literary studies: A text is not only the result of its context, but affects this context as well.

Studying the interplay between text and context is of great importance for the early modern pamphlet in particular. After all, this medium includes all aspects that interest historians, literary scholars, media scholars and book historians. The pamphlet has to be considered as a commercial product, a literary product, a news medium and a propagandistic tool in one.⁹ Instead of trying to isolate any single aspect of the pamphlet, one should study all these aspects in connection.¹⁰

Such an interdisciplinary approach could lead to a better insight into the ways politics were discussed in pamphlets. According to Willem Frijhoff and Marijke Spies, pamphlets have to be considered as a reflection of a discussion culture: They mirror the extent of the (political) participation of the reading public and the intensity of political debate in general.¹¹ However, this assumption raises the question: What did this discussion look like? In what way was politics actually debated in pamphlets?

In what follows, I will answer this question for the political conflict of 1650. During a moment of crisis, the interaction between all those concerned with pamphlet production (booksellers, authors and politicians) becomes most visible.¹² After all, for politicians, booksellers and authors, interest in as well as the possibilities for producing a pamphlet increased during a conflict: Politicians needed propaganda and

Orality and Literacy. The Technologizing of the World (London/New York, 1988). For criticism on Eisenstein, see: A. Johns, "How to Acknowledge a Revolution," *American Historical Review* 107 (2002). His article is followed by a reply of Elisabeth Eisenstein on pages 126–128. See also: A. Johns, *The Nature of the Book. Print and Knowledge on the Making* (Chicago, 1998).

⁹ See also J. Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering*, 25–26. According to him, the difficulty in formulating a simple definition of the 'pamphlet', is the result of four characteristics of this medium: (1) pamphlets can only be defined by taking into account complex historical phenomena; (2) pamphlets are literary products; (3) pamphlets are partly responsible for a metamorphosis of the nature and idea of print in the early modern era; (4) pamphlets were read and therefore had a social impact.

¹⁰ Recently, Jeroen Salman has shown how book historians can fulfil a bridging function between historians on the one side, and literary scholars and philosophers on the other. J. Salman, "De middelpuntvliedende kracht van de boekgeschiedenis," *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 121:4 (2008).

¹¹ W.T.M. Frijhoff and M. Spies, *1650. Bevochten eendracht* (The Hague, 1999), 222.

¹² J.D. Popkin and J.R. Censer, "Lessons from a Symposium," in *Media and Revolution*, ed. J.D. Popkin (Kentucky, 1995), 4.

booksellers and authors could earn some extra money. A conflict could therefore catalyse innovations in both form and content of pamphlets.¹³ Is it possible to discover such an innovation in 1650, or a change in the way in which politics was debated? Firstly, I will show what kind of pamphlets appeared, by making a statistical genre-analysis of all pamphlets related to the conflict. Subsequently, I will focus more extensively on the form and content of these booklets. By connecting my findings to the political and economic context, I will finally describe the changing function of the pamphlet during the crisis of 1650.

Changes in pamphlet genres

A quantitative analysis of the Knuttel catalogue, the largest catalogue of seventeenth-century Dutch pamphlets, has shown a production peak in several politically unstable years, including the turbulent year of 1650.¹⁴ The Knuttel catalogue contains 132 pamphlets (reprints

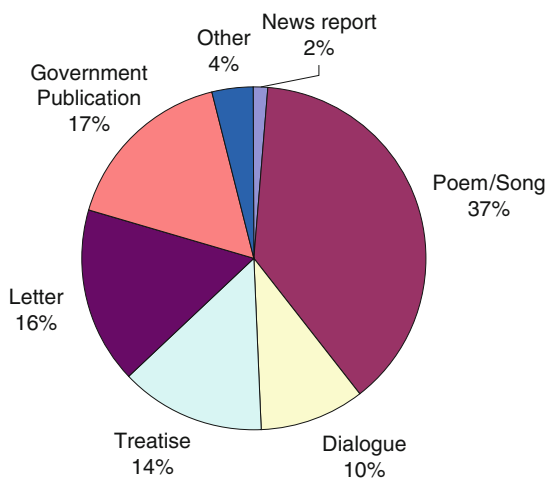


Figure 1. Analysis of pamphlet genres of 1650 pamphlets in the Knuttel catalogue related to the conflict between the Stadtholder and the city of Amsterdam (total: 132)

¹³ J.D. Popkin, "Media and Revolutionary Crises," in *Media and Revolution*, ed. Popkin, 17.

¹⁴ Dingemanse counted all pamphlets in the catalogue of Knuttel per year between 1600 and 1750. See Dingemanse, *Rap van Tong*, 23–24. For this article I have used her findings, plus my own counts of the pamphlets in the catalogue of Knuttel. See:

excluded) that are related to the quarrel between the Stadtholder and the city of Amsterdam.¹⁵ Figure 1 displays the outcome of a genre-analysis of these political pamphlets.

The figure shows a high diversity of genres, although the portion of pamphlets written in verse is significantly larger than any of the other parts.¹⁶ But are these statistics for pamphlet genres representative for the whole period? If we make a division between pamphlets published before and after the siege of Amsterdam, we discover an enormous shift in both the total amount of pamphlets (from 18 published before to 114 published after the siege) and the genre division.

It turns out that the large number of pamphlets written in verse appeared only after the siege of Amsterdam. Apparently, this was the most popular pamphlet genre used to discuss the military strategy of the Stadtholder. In order to understand this shift in pamphlet genres, I will now turn to the content.

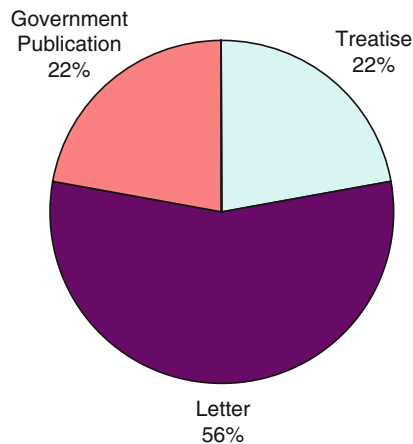


Figure 2. Analysis of pamphlet genres of 1650 pamphlets in the catalogue of Knuttel related to the conflict between the Stadtholder and the city of Amsterdam, published before the siege (total: 18)

W.P.C. Knuttel, *Catalogus van de pamfletten-verzameling berustende in de Koninklijke Bibliotheek* (Utrecht, 1978) [Reprint].

¹⁵ The Knuttel catalogue contains many reprints, especially for 1650. These pamphlets have been sorted out of the selection. See the appendix for further details about pamphlet selection and analysis.

¹⁶ It is not always clear whether a pamphlet in verse was meant to be sung. Therefore, I took the two genres poem and song together in my count. In this paper, I will refer to all these pamphlets in verse by the term 'poem'.

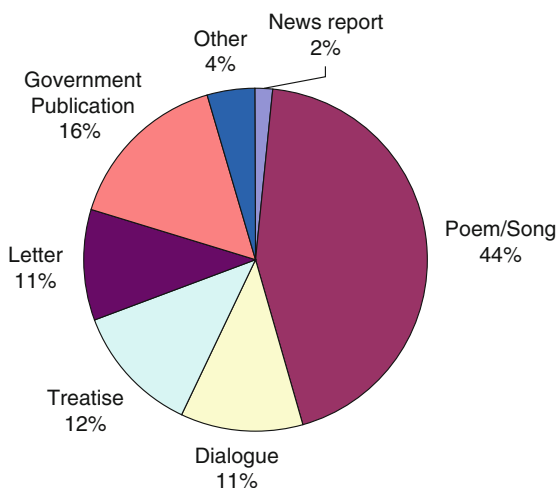


Figure 3. Analysis of pamphlet genres of 1650 pamphlets in the catalogue of Knuttel related to the conflict between the Stadtholder and the city of Amsterdam, published after the siege (total: 114)

Media strategies of politicians

Stadtholder William II deliberately utilised pamphlets as an instrument to influence public opinion in 1650.¹⁷ The best example of this strategy is a fictional state publication, entitled *Articles, agreed upon between the Republic of England on the one, and the city of Amsterdam on the other side*.¹⁸ The publication contained a fictional agreement between Amsterdam and England, in which England promised to support Amsterdam militarily in a battle against the rest of the Dutch Republic.¹⁹

¹⁷ S. Groenveld, “‘Een enckel valsche ende lasterlijck verdrichtsels’. Een derde actie van prins Willem II in juli 1650,” in *Bestuurders en geleerden*, ed. S. Groenveld, M. Mout and I. Schöffer (Utrecht, 1985), 113.

¹⁸ *Articulen, geslooten ende geaccordeert tusschen de Republiqque van Engelandt ter eenre, en de stad Amsterdam in ’t particulier ter andere sijde* (1650) Knuttel 6713.

¹⁹ This process has been described by Simon Groenveld, who used the Amsterdam confession books (judicial confessions of Amsterdam suspects). See Groenveld, “‘Een enckel valsche ende lasterlijck verdrichtsels’”. The incident is also described by M. Keblusek, *Boeken in de hofstad. Haagse boekcultuur in de Gouden Eeuw* (Hilversum, 1997), 129–133 and 190, and by I. Prins, “Amsterdamse schimpdichters vervolgd,” *Amstelodamum* 30 (1933). Besides these descriptions, I have also used the original confession itself: Stadsarchief Amsterdam, Archief schout en schepenen, inv. no. 308, Confessieboeken (1649–1652), f. 155 et seq.

It was only a twist of fate that caused the printer of this strongly controversial pamphlet – Willem Breeckvelt of The Hague – to be unmasked in December 1650. During a visit in Amsterdam he was officially arrested for stealing linen, but it soon turned out he was the printer of different contentious pamphlets, of which the *Articulen* was the most controversial. The judges forced him to divulge the name of the person who had commissioned him to print the booklet. At first, Breeckvelt vaguely referred to an anonymous pedlar who had come to his printing shop with the written text. Under torture, however, he finally broke down and confessed that the text had been delivered to him by Johan Spronsen: One of the political advisors of Stadtholder William II, and also a clerk of the States General.

Although gathering news through clerks of the States General was not unique,²⁰ the pamphlet that contained the *Articulen* was a fictional agreement: Negative propaganda against Amsterdam, made up by the Stadtholder or one of his advisors.²¹ Apparently, William II had deliberately attempted to set up the other provinces against the local government of Amsterdam. In a conversation with William Frederick (Stadtholder of Friesland) the Stadtholder had described his intention to stir up the people with small booklets and pasquils.²² The fictional state publication must be considered as one of the results of this intention.

Other pamphlets also seem to be part of this media offensive. On 29 July for example, William II directed a pamphlet to the mayors of Amsterdam. In this letter he announced that he had sent an army to the capital, in order to subject the Amsterdam magistrate to his power.²³ However, the city had to be taken by surprise, to avoid any resistance. As is well known though, the army lost its way overnight and was accidentally discovered by a passer-by. Amsterdam had therefore been able to close its gates well before the arrival of William's army, and the Stadtholder was forced to negotiate with the magistrate.²⁴ It probably

²⁰ Koblusek has thoroughly described how Lieuwe van Aitzema, a politician in The Hague, together with his clerks passed on secret, political news to both domestic and foreign printers. The news was then printed in their weekly periodicals. Breeckvelt had probably obtained his 'bona fide' political news in the same way. See Koblusek, *Boeken in de Hofstad*, 235–269.

²¹ Koblusek, *Boeken in de hofstad*, 190; Groenveld, "‘Een enckel valsche ende lasterlijck verdictsel’", 120–122.

²² Groenveld, "‘Een enckel valsche ende lasterlijck verdictsel’", 113.

²³ *Copie Van Een Missive gesonden by syn Hoogheyt, Aen de E.E. Heeren Burgemeesteren en Regeerders der Stadt Amsterdam* (1650) Knuttel 6683.

²⁴ G.W. Kernkamp, *Prins Willem II* (Amsterdam, 1943), 119–160.

was his purpose to publish the letter to the Amsterdam magistrate concurrently with, or directly after, the taking of the city: The pamphlet would immediately have justified his questionable political action. Despite the failed attempt, the pamphlet was still produced and distributed, though it was clear the content had been written before the outcome on 30 July, since it made no mention of the failure of the attack.

An author who afterwards summarised the conflict also referred to circulating rumours about the taking of Amsterdam, as if this had already happened:

Meanwhile, His Highness was in the Hague, where, on the same Saturday, all this happened in Amsterdam, the news that William, the Count of Friesland, with seventy of his troupes, both on foot and on horse, had come into Amsterdam was spread everywhere. For they did not doubt their success (...).²⁵

Other passages also refer to the fact that William II preferred a public debate over secrecy. In a *Proposition* the Stadtholder openly reacted to the “disastrous” resolution of the States of Holland to reduce troops. This decision would lead to disorder and immense problems (“disordre ende groote swarichheyt”) and was also taken without previous communication with the member provinces (“sonder voorgaende communicatie van hare Bondtghenooten”) and against the will of the deputies (tegen de wil “van der selver Gedeputeerde”).²⁶ Holland was thus openly discredited and an anonymous opponent of the Stadtholder angrily reacted:

It was not enough to just send the Proposition to the magistrates; but they have printed it, so that the Proposition is done to the whole town, yeah to the whole world.²⁷

²⁵ *Amsterdams Journael. Vervatende kortelijck van dag tot dag, Alles wat gepasseert is van den 30 Julij, tot den 4 Augusti des Jaers 1650* (1650) Knuttel 6704, 19. Original: “Onder-tussen was Sijn hoogheyt in ’s Gravenhaeg: Alwaer op die selve Saterdag, dat dit te Amsterdam alsoo toe-ging, over al uyt gestroyt wierd, dat Graef Willem van Vriesland met seventig Compagnien, soo te voet als te paerd binnen Amsterdam was. Want daer wierd niet getwijfelt, of de saek was wel gelukt.” I want to thank Helmer Helmers for helping me with translating this and the following Dutch passages into English.

²⁶ *Propositie van syn hoocheyt ende de heeren gedeputeerden van de ... Staten Generael, gedaen inde respective steden van Hollandt* (1650) Knuttel 6637, A2 r^o.

²⁷ *Noodige Aenmerckinge Op seeckere Propositionen In Junio 1650. gedaen inde Hollantsche Steden* (1650) Knuttel 6767, A2 r^o. “Het was niet genouch te doen eene Propositie aen de Vroetschappen; maer men heeftse laten drucken, waer deur de selve inderdaet is ghedaen aen de gheheele Gemeente, jae aen al de weerelt.”

However, this was a good excuse for the author to publish his own political text as well, in which he used the rhetoric of the Stadtholder against him:

What is spoken to everyone, can be answered by everyone. Therefore, do not blame me that – because of the good Hollandic municipality – I say no-one can stop better the disorder and problems, of which the first part of the Proposition speaks, than the ones who make disorder and problems themselves.²⁸

The pro-Amsterdam author told the reader he was more or less compelled to react in print. Although this statement must partly be considered as a rhetorical strategy in order to make the reader sympathetic to the author's point of view, it was at the same time a reference to the generally accepted idea that politics should not be openly discussed in pamphlets.²⁹ But since the Stadtholder rejected this idea, his opponents were forced to respond in pamphlets as well. After the Stadtholder had publicly expressed his anger about being denied entry to the meeting of the Amsterdam council,³⁰ a pro-Amsterdam author, for example, explained he would have rather kept this conflict behind closed doors:

Their Honourables would have liked everything to have passed in silence. Through their Deputies they did indeed attempt to satisfy His Highness in order to dispose him to the same. (...) Yet now they find themselves forced to present and state the following, because the aforesaid has already been spread among the people through printed copies.³¹

²⁸ Ibid. "Wat dan alsoo aen yder een is ghesproocken, mach by yder een werden beantwoort; Neemt dan niet qualijck dat van wegen de goede Hollantsche Gemeente, ick segge dat *niemant disordre ende swaricheyt*, daer van het eerste Lidt van de Propositie spreeket, *beter voorsien als die de disordre ende swaricheyt selfs maecken*."

²⁹ Harline, *Pamphlets*, 113–115.

³⁰ *Deductie ofte Verantwoordinge Van de Heeren Burgemeesteren ende ses-en-dertigh Raden der Stadt Amsterdam, Op ende tegens de Propositie by sijne Hoogheyt Den Heere Prince van Orangien, overgelevert ter vergaderinge van de Ed: Groot Moogende Heeren Staten van Hollandt ende West-Vrieslandt* (1650) Knuttel 6655.

³¹ Ibid., 1. "Hoewel hare Achtbare gaerne ghesien hadden, dat alle het geene hier omtrent was voorgevallen, in stilte ware voor by gegaen, ghelijck haer Achtbare oock getracht hebben, door hare Gedeputeerden, sijn hoogheyt daer toe te disponeeren ende contentement te geven. (...) Soo vinden sy nochtans haer tegenwoordigh genooddruckt, tot haer Achtbare ontschuldige ende justificatie, aen U. Ed. Gr. Mo. te presenteren ende voor te dragen het navolgende; te meer, aengesien de voorsz. by gedruckte Copyen over al onder de Gemeente is ghestroyt."

In yet another pamphlet, in which the conflict was summarised, the author also regretted the public character of the quarrel, but at the same time stressed the advantages of the publicity:

However, the dispute between the Province of Holland and the six other provinces is so public, that I already regret everything I have told so far: the blue books that daily appear are full of this topic. Nevertheless, to be honest, it may also serve me to point out the first cause of the Amsterdam unrest.³²

The comments in the pamphlets thus give rise to the idea that William II purposely tried to manipulate the audience. The Amsterdam magistrate was therefore forced to react in print as well.

The examples show that before the siege of Amsterdam both the Stadtholder and Amsterdam were making pamphlets part of their political strategies. This explains why most pamphlets appeared in letters and government publications. Most of the booklets were the result of a deliberate attempt of the two political parties to influence public opinion.

Series of pamphlet poems

Pamphlet production rose to enormous heights after the siege of Amsterdam on 30 July. At the same time, the genre of pamphlets changed significantly, as figure 3 showed. The poem became the most popular pamphlet genre used to discuss the siege of Amsterdam. These findings correspond with recent ideas about early modern Dutch literature in general. In their voluminous overview of seventeenth-century Dutch literature, Porteman and Smits-Veldt conclude that a good deal of literature was meant to be sung. Songs were also a good medium to spread the news.³³ It thus becomes apparent that there was

³² *Amsterdams Journael, Vervatende kortelijc van dag tot dag, Alles wat gepasseert is van den 30 Julij, tot den 4 Augusti des Jaers 1650. Met een korte beschrijvinge Vande stigting, op-komst en heerlijkheyd der voorseyde Stadt Amsterdam* (1650) Knuttel 6704, 14. Original: "Doch het geschil tussen de Provincie van Holland en de ses anderen is soo openbaer; dat ik alrede berouw hebbe van het gene tot noch toe verhaelt is: De blauew boekjens die dagelijx in't ligt komen sijn vol van dese stof. Niet te min, om de waerheyd ook te seggen, het kan my ook dienen om de eerste oorsaek van de Amsterdamsche onrust aen te wijsen."

³³ K. Porteman and M. Smits-Veldt, *Een nieuw vaderland voor de muzen. Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse literatuur 1560–1700* (Amsterdam, 2008), 886.

no clear distinction between news and literature: A pamphlet poem was both at the same time.³⁴

The pamphlet poem typically has a polemical function.³⁵ The poems usually favour either the Stadtholder or Amsterdam, and additionally criticise the other party. The way in which Groenveld has depicted the 1650 pamphlets in general also applies to the poems: They describe a whole range of feelings against the Prince, from very heavy outbursts to extremely reserved and considered judgements.³⁶ Among these pamphlet poems we can discover a number of series in which pamphlets explicitly react to each other, thereby showing their autonomous dynamics.

A good example of such a series is *Joy for the liberation of Amsterdam*³⁷ and the poems that reacted to this text. The *Blydschap* was an alteration of the famous chorus after the first act in Vondel's tragedy *Gysbrecht van Aemstel*.³⁸ Moreover, the pamphlet writer had falsely put the name of the famous poet beneath the poem. In the original passage the "Joy for Amsterdam" was sung:

Now sweet voices, most delightful throng,
 Agree to perform with play and song
 To praise Our Lord. How He looked down,
 Enthroned so high and glorious,
 How greedy acts became more obvious:
 For Sparen desired Amstel's crown.
 How Vengeance, with instruments of war,
 Tried to ruin the tower-crown that bore,
 This city so renowned for splendour,
 And with violent armed gangs to rip,
 The girdles of defense from off her hip,
 Intending her treasure to plunder,

(...)

Where is now that giant, once so brash,
 Who wanted Gijsbrecht's city to trash,

³⁴ Cf. P. Dijkstra, "Gemengde berichten. Nieuws als literatuur in de zeventiende eeuw," *Literatuur* 17:5 (2000).

³⁵ Vrieler, *Het poëtisch accent*, 202–203.

³⁶ Groenveld, *De Prins voor Amsterdam*, 69.

³⁷ *Blydschap, Over de verlossing van Amsterdam* (1650) Knuttel 6785.

³⁸ The play was first performed at the opening of the new Amsterdam theatre in 1638. The most famous tragedy in Dutch history was staged yearly, until 1968. See Porteman and Smits-Veldt, *Een nieuw vaderland voor de muzen*, 379–383.

Circumscribe its walls with his long arms?
 He runs away so fast, what's the need?
 What groundless fear causes their stampede,
 Such great cowards, crying false alarms?
 (...)
 Enter, Amstel, enter now within,
 Even without fighting you can win.
 Enter, you brave burghers, full of fight,
 Who've done your duty so unfearing –
 Honour to every age endearing.
 Heaven will be ever on your side.³⁹

Now, the pamphlet writer of 1650 had modified this pamphlet to the political events of his time: He praised the failure of Stadtholder William II's siege of Amsterdam. The author started with the lines:

Now sweet voices, most delightful throng,
 Agree to perform with play and song,
 To praise Our Lord. How He looked down,
 Enthroned so high and glorious,
 How greedy acts became more obvious:
Lord William desired Amstel's crown.⁴⁰

This pamphlet was highly controversial for two reasons: Firstly it had libelled the Stadtholder, and secondly it had 'stolen' the lines of Vondel and had been signed with Vondel's name. Hence, the pamphlet was immediately banned, although this prohibition did not prevent a stream of sequels and alterations.

³⁹ J. van den Vondel, *Gijsbrecht van Aemstel*, ed. M. Smits-Veldt (Amsterdam, 1994) 51–52. For the translation I have used the edition of K.P.G. Aercke (Ottawa, 1991), 72–73. In Dutch: "Nu stelt het puick van zoete keelen, Om daar gezangen op te speelen, Tot lof van God, die op zijn' troon, Gezeten is, zoo hoogh en heerlijk; Van waer hy zien kon, hoe begeerlijck, Het Sparen stack na Aemstels kroon, Hoe wraeck met zwaerden en met speeren, De torenkroon van 't hoofd wou scheeren, Der schoone en wijd vermaerde stad, en rucken door geweld van benden, Der vesten gordel van haer lenden, En plondren haer kleenood en schat (...) Waer is de reus met al zijn stoffen, Die Gijsbreghts stad ter neer wou ploffen. En om haer' muur zijn armen slaen? Wat ydle schrick heeft hem geslaegen? Wat ydle vreeze mag hen jaegen, Die nu met schande strijcken gaen? (...) Treck in, o Aemstel, treck nu binnen, Die zonder slagh kunt overwinnen. Treck in, o braeve burglary, Die u zoo moedigh hebt gequeten. Geen eeuw en zal uw eer vergeten. De hemel sta u eeuwich by."

⁴⁰ *Blydschap, Over de verlossing van Amsterdam* (1650) Knuttel 6785. "Nu stelt het puick van zoete keelen, Om daar gezangen op te speelen, Tot lof van God, die op zijn' troon, Gezeten is, zoo hoogh en heerlijk; Van waer hy zien kon, hoe begeerlijck, *Heer Willem* stack na Aemstels kroon."

The first reaction was entitled *To the Joy, for the Liberation of Amsterdam*,⁴¹ in which the author used the same rhyme and metre as in the *Joy*. The poem started with the lines:

Thou openst everyones mouth and throats,
Now that you come playing your old Role:
Evil Slanderer, who does not spare State, nor Throne,
nor Monarch, no matter how high or glorious,
But lustfully violates and resists her honour,
Here thou touches William's peace-throne, and poetizes,
thine revenge with Sword and Spears
wanted to shave off Amstel's jewel-peak.⁴²

The author thus reacted again in the same form and used the same last words in every line as in Vondel's chorus. In his text he compared the poet of the *Joy* to a donkey hunting a lion, until the lion discovers by whom he is being followed and kills the donkey. He thereby referred in a footnote to Vondel's *Game Reserve of Animals*.⁴³ In the last lines, he again playfully referred to the untruthful use of Vondel's name:

Though thou again delights the citizenry
(Ha idle, thou hast acquitted yourself well!)

⁴¹ Many thanks to Nettie Schwartz, who brought this pamphlet – which is not in the catalogue of Knuttel – to my attention. Both Unger and Schuytplot refer to this pamphlet in their bibliographies of Vondel's works, under the special category "Uncertain ascriptions". See J.H.W. Unger, *Bibliographie van Vondels werken* (Amsterdam, 1888), 154–155; A.C. Schuytplot, *Catalogus van werken van en over Vondel gedrukt vóór 1801 en aanwezig in de Universiteitsbibliotheek van Amsterdam* (Amsterdam, 1987), 249–250. The pamphlet is kept in the Library of the University of Amsterdam.

⁴² *Op de Blytschap, over de Verlossing van Amsterdam* (1650). Original: "Gy opent yeders mont en Keelen, Nu ghy u oude Rol komt spelen: Snô Lasteraar, die Staat, noch Throon, Noch Vorst, ontziet, hoe groot of heerlick, Maar schend en troost haar eer begerlick, Hier raakt ghy WILHELMUS Vrede-kroon. En dicht, dijn wraak met Swaard en Speeren, Wou AEMSTELS spits-cieraat af scheeren."

⁴³ Vondel's *Vorstellicke Warande der dieren* contains a story of "The Lion, the Cock and the Donkey" ("De Leeuw, Den Haen en den Ezel"). In this story, a lion is scared by the crowing of a cock and runs away. However, a reckless donkey thinks the lion is scared of him and runs after the lion. When the lion discovers the donkey, he jumps on him and tears him apart. The moral of this story was not to mock the Prince when he fled, as this would only feed his sadness. See: J. van den Vondel, *De wercken van Vondel deel 1, 1605–1620*, ed. J.F.M. Sterck et al. (Amsterdam, 1927), 744–745.

And dedicates to her, so dishonourable, your old New⁴⁴
How does it come to VONDEL?⁴⁵

Should this poem indeed be considered as a stinging reaction of Vondel himself? The reader will notice that the poet gave no decisive answer to this question. He used Vondel's name twice, firstly in the title: *To the Joy, about the liberation of Amsterdam, By Joost van den Vondel*. The addition "By Joost van den Vondel" is part of the whole sentence and can therefore be interpreted in two ways. It could be either an addition to the constituent *Joy for the liberation of Amsterdam* (the first poem that was signed with Vondel's name), or to the constituent *To the Joy* and thus to the reaction the reader was now reading.

The second time he used Vondel's name – at the bottom of the text – had to mystify the reader even more. This time the name "VONDEL" (purposely printed in capitals) can be read either as the last word of the sentence "Hoe komt het by Vondel?" as well as a subscription of the author. The question mark following the name was cleverly meant to raise confusion.

After this first reaction, two other pamphlets appeared that condemned the so-called "thievery" of Vondel's text. Yet again though, both pamphlets were alterations of the original passage from the *Gysbrecht*, using the same metre and rhyme as in the *Joy*. The authors were thus accusing others of the "thievery" they were concurrently guilty of. One of these pamphlets was again signed with the name of Vondel, though it is highly unlikely that he wrote this reaction himself.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the author clearly expressed that Vondel's poetry could never be equalled and ended his poem as follows:

Check your foolish envy, swell-head,
For never shall you⁴⁷ overcome,
The honour of the citizens of Amstel.
O, you did your best,

⁴⁴ The old poem changed into a new one.

⁴⁵ *Op de Blytschap, over de Verlossing van Amsterdam* (1650). Original: "Doch ghy streelt wéér de Burghery; (Ha looze, g'hebt u wel gequeten!), En draaght haar op, zoo eer-vergeten, U oude Nieuw: Hoe komt het by VONDEL?"

⁴⁶ This assumption is based on the content of the pamphlet, in which Vondel is profoundly praised. If Vondel would really have been the author, he would probably have depicted himself in a more modest way.

⁴⁷ *You*: the poet of the *Blydschap*.

But now you've blunted all your teeth,
On him⁴⁸, who lives forever by the Y!⁴⁹

The second reaction was entitled *To the thievish Slander-Poets, to their Joy for the Liberation of Amsterdam*.⁵⁰ In this pamphlet, the author once more reacted with a parody of the same *Gysbrecht*-passage, in which he used a low style to describe an exalted topic. The writer depicted himself as an outsider and satirised the fact that Vondel's words were used "to eliminate his honour". He especially mocked the anger with which Vondel's defender had reacted to the first author.⁵¹ With this satire the reactions were drifting away from the original debate about politics, though they were still highly up-to-date, reacting in a popular format to the same "thievery of literature". Also, the final lines of this pamphlet still referred to the honour of Amsterdam, without any sense of irony:

Hear cuckoos! Keep your writing in,
Or one day you'll be overcome,
With reason; I'faith, our citizens,
Have acted loyally and just,
Despite your evil ridicule,
This praise will be forever theirs.⁵²

Nevertheless, the series of pamphlets continued with another two poems: *Echo to the Joy for the Liberation of Amsterdam*,⁵³ and the *After-Echo to the Echo against the un-Hollandic enviers of the Liberation of*

⁴⁸ *Him* refers to Amsterdam, as well as to Vondel.

⁴⁹ *Aan den Lasteraar, Op de Verlossing van Amsterdam* (1650) Knuttel 6788. Original: "Ai, hou uw zotte nijt maar binnen; Ghy zult, verwaande, dog niet winnen, Op deer van Amstels Burgerry [sic]. Hoe moedig hebt gy u gequeten, Nu ge uw gebit hebt stomp gebeten, Op hem, die eeuwig leeft aan 't Y!"

⁵⁰ *Aen de Diefsche Laster-Poeten, Op haer Blijdschap over de Verlossing van Amsterdam* (1650) Knuttel 6787.

⁵¹ See the lines: "The second, while whipping, constantly shouts, His own rod has whipped him. His own bogeyman comes hunting him. Look at *Uncle Joost* moving back and forth." In Dutch: "Den tweeden roept vast onder 't slaen. Zijn eygen roe heeft hem geslagen. Zijn eigen bulback, komt hem jagen. Siet *Joost-oom* nu eens schuyve gaen."

⁵² *Aen de Diefsche Laster-Poeten, Op haer Blijdschap over de Verlossing van Amsterdam* (1650) Knuttel 6787. Original: "Hoor Koeckoeckx! houd' u schrijve binnen; Of men sal u eens overwinnen, Met reeden; ja ons Burgerry, Heeft haer seer trouw en wel gequeeten, Schoon ghy 't bespot soo eervergeeten, Dees lof die blijft haer eeuwich by."

⁵³ *De weder galm van de Blijdschap over de verlossinghe van Amsterdam* (1650) Knuttel 6789.

Amsterdam and rebelling Pasquil-poets.⁵⁴ These pamphlets only reacted to the political message of the *Blydschap*, in the now well-known formula. In the *Echo* however, the representation of facts was turned around: The Bickers were depicted as usurpers who wanted to “eliminate the political power of William”. Yet the author is delighted that the Bickers have been forced to resign and have asked mercy for their sins. He is therefore prepared to forgive and forget their shameful act:

Therefore we are willing to forget your shame
ORANGE, stand by you forever.⁵⁵

Finally, the *After-Echo* once more reacted in the same form, again supporting the city of Amsterdam. The author blamed adherents of William II – they had wanted to “plunder her treasury” – and the pamphlet concluded with the lines:

Together, we're content within,
And never shall be overcome
By mutineers. The citizens
Are to that purpose well prepared,
Honour and duty they'll obey
And aid each other with their souls.⁵⁶

What do these series of poems tell us about the function of pamphlets? Above all, they reveal that these media gained their own dynamics, and were not fully controlled by politicians. The poets did not just reflect on the political events, but started an internal debate that was as much a literary game as a political polemic. Intertextuality strengthened the polemical function of the poem, as Joost Vrieler has recently shown in his dissertation.⁵⁷ But it could be argued that intertextuality was also a good strategy to increase the popularity of a text. Copying a successful form and content, and using the name of a famous Amsterdam poet,

⁵⁴ *Na-ghalm op de Wederghalm Tegen de on-hollandtsche benyders Der verlossing van Amsterdam en muitende Passe-qyuil dichters* (1650) Knuttel 6790.

⁵⁵ *De weder galm van de Blijdschap over de verlossinghe van Amsterdam* (1650) Knuttel 6789. Original: “Dies willen wy u schandt vergeten, ORANGIEN, sta uw' eeuwich by.”

⁵⁶ *Na-ghalm op de Wederghalm Tegen de on-hollandtsche benyders Der verlossing van Amsterdam en muitende Passe-qyuil dichters* (1650) Knuttel 6790. Original: “Wy zyn met t'ons vernoght hier binnen, en laten ons nooyt overwinnen, van muyters, neen: de *Burghery* heeft zich daer toe wel gequeeten, En wil nooyt eer noch plight vergeeften, Maar staan met ziel elkander by.”

⁵⁷ Vrieler, *Het poëtisch accent*, 203.

seemed to be a successful strategy to attract readers. This leads to the assumption that booksellers and authors were producing pamphlets not so much out of an ideology, but simply to feed public demand, in order to earn some extra money. This could also explain why the banning of the first pamphlet in the series only led to more pamphlets in the same form. Other series of poems and dialogues support this assumption.

Literary pamphlets as bestsellers

From the series of poems discussed above, it becomes clear how the stream of pamphlets ‘automatically’ generated more pamphlets, and how publishers could easily ignore official censorship. After all, the political conflict was deliberately carried out in public, and this was only possible if booksellers were used as an instrument for politics. However, booksellers and authors were not only submissive extensions of politicians, they could also try to profit from the conflict by generating more pamphlets.

Presumably, commercially motivated booksellers simply wanted to reach the largest possible reading public. This assumption is supported by the low style in which most poems are written. Other series of pamphlet poems are even more outspoken about the reading public, as they address the slums of Amsterdam. The pamphlet *Indelicate Treatise, about the Siege of Amsterdam* for example, describes the rough discussion between people of low social status, living in the poor quarters of the capital.

The entire neighbourhood assembled
at *Lijntje Puttens* door, where Granny sat with tubers.
Teunis Tewissen called ‘Hark *John*, are you the *Prince’s man*?
Or are you for the *States*?’⁵⁸

Some characters favour the Stadtholder, others support the city of Amsterdam. The above-named *Teunis*, for example, says he “lives and dies for the country”, while *Smout the Cook* mentions:

⁵⁸ *Onbescheyt, over de Belegering van Amsterdam* (1650) Knuttel 6791. Original: “De hele achterbuyrt die raeckten aen het hollen, Voor *Lijntje Puttens* deur, daar besje sat met knollen, Riep *Teunis Tewissen* aen *Ian oom* over straat, Wat ben je een *Prince man*? of voor de *Vrije-staat*?”

I do not recognise the Prince
He seeks to be our Sovereign.⁵⁹

These arguments resemble arguments of the elite, but are expressed in this text by people of the lower classes.

Other pamphlets are written in the same form, like the *Unexpected Blockade of the Amsterdam People*⁶⁰ and *Lost Joy for Jan Qua-maer, About the Dutch Unrest*.⁶¹ All these pamphlets depict common people, who discuss the national conflict. The *Unexpected Blockade* for example, describes a crowd of people, talking about the siege of Amsterdam.

Claes the Clown and Chatty Nel they brood the country, full with fools,
who after dark assemble at the inn.
Jan Everyman knows all the secrets of the state,
The Stockbroker is privy to the latest news,
Floor Flutist says 'decorated crooked wood shavings,
with which News-sick Dirk fills his purse'.⁶²

The first and last line of this passage show clearly what this pamphlet is about. Apparently, the whole city is busily talking with each other, and everyone is giving his or her opinion. In the evening, people come together and speak to each other about the latest news, which is sold by Dirk News-sick. According to Floor the Flutist though, his pamphlets are nothing but "decorated, crooked wood shavings" with which he can fill his purse.

These series of pamphlets are again written in the same form and style, addressing common people and reflecting a discussion culture. Moreover, by depicting a character named Dirk News-sick who sells the news, the pamphlet also portrays the news market itself. This commentary gives us a glimpse of the functioning of the pamphlet market. The vendor of news is pictured as someone who produces news just to

⁵⁹ Ibid. Original: "ik ken de *Prins* voor onsen Heer niet, Hij staat om Souverain te zijn."

⁶⁰ *Onverwachtinge Blockeeringe der Amsterdammers* (1650) Knuttel 6805.

⁶¹ *Verdwene Vreugt, voor Jan Qua-maer, Over d'Hollantse Onrust* (1650) Knuttel 6793.

⁶² *Onverwachtinge Blockeeringe der Amsterdammers* (1650) Knuttel 6805. Original: "Claes Naer en Praetje-by die broeden 't Landt vol zotten, Die inde Uyle-vlucht des Avonts t'zamen rotten, Jan Alle-man die weet het murch vande staet, En d'Accy-kooper weet al watter omme gaet, En Floor de Fluytter zeydt, versierde kromme krullen, Daar Dirk Tydingh-ziek de beurs meê plach te vullen."

make a profit. Therefore, the news must be seen as nothing but a product for sale, without any ideological value.

Ironically, the message of this pamphlet devaluates the medium in which it appears, which could have been a publishing strategy. By reflecting on the enormous production of nonsense, the publisher again tried to attract the reader. After all, the reader of the pamphlet recognized a situation that was partly created by him since he was the buyer of the pamphlet. The low value of the news content (news is produced only to sell) was proven by the pamphlet the reader has bought a moment ago: The content reflected on the news hunger and thereby produced more news at the same time.⁶³

Although the series of poems are not as long as in the series of the *Joy*, it is clear that intertextuality plays an important part in these 'slum poems' as well. However, intertextuality is characteristic not only for poems, but seems to have been important for literary pamphlets in general. In her dissertation about pamphlet dialogues, Clazina Dingemanse has shown how, by referring to each other as well as to other pamphlets, dialogues strongly interacted, especially in 1650. She analysed in detail two sequels of the pamphlet *Hollandic Discourse*, each printed by a different printer. Apparently, two other printers had quickly printed a sequel of a successful pamphlet, before the original printer could have done this himself.⁶⁴

The printer of the original *Hollandic Discourse* reacted by publishing a *Protest*, in which he explained to the reader that these sequels were not authentic. In the pamphlet he told the reader:

I immediately saw, this was done just because the first part was so successfully sold, and I also recognised, that these people did it only to make a profit.⁶⁵

This *Protest* was a strategically published pamphlet, with which the publisher at the same time justified his own, forthcoming sequels: *Authentic Second Part* and *Authentic Third Part*.

⁶³ Significantly, the text was again signed with the initials of Vondel, as if he had been the author of the text. Apparently, Vondel was so popular in his own time, his name could function to enhance the status of the pamphlet.

⁶⁴ Dingemanse, *Rap van tong*, 97–179, spec. 165–166.

⁶⁵ *Protest van den Brabander, aen de lesers van't Hollands praetje* (1650) Knuttel 6837, 5–6. Original: "Ick sag terstondt wel, dat het alleen daarom gedaan wiert, om dat het Eerste Deel soo wel verkocht was, en sag oock wel, dat die luyden het nergens anders om deden dan om haar profijt daar uyt te trecken."

Dingemanse's analysis made clear that the production of a dialogue with a political message was not necessarily ideologically motivated. The *Hollandic Discourses* should be considered as commercial products in the first place, made by booksellers who wanted to profit from a successful formula. This formula seems to have dominated the political content, which was just copied and slightly modified from earlier pamphlets. One dialogue – *Neighbourly Discourse Between Three Men of Amsterdam*⁶⁶ – even lacked a clear political point of view. Analysis by Dingemanse showed that the political topic in this pamphlet (whether the mayor of Amsterdam was a sincere politician or not) was of minor importance. Instead, the abundant references to other pamphlets and to a bookseller reveal that this pamphlet had to function as an advertisement for other texts. According to Dingemanse, this pamphlet was about commerce, making and selling news.⁶⁷

Conclusion

In this article I have shown how the function of the pamphlet changed during a moment of crisis. In the first stage of the Dutch conflict of 1650, both political parties were well aware of the importance of printed news. They made pamphlets part of their politics, deliberately trying to influence the people. This awareness of the possible effects of pamphlets is best shown by the fictional government publication, brought to the printer by an advisor of the Stadtholder: An alleged agreement between Amsterdam and England. Whether or not the reading public doubted the authenticity of this publication, it does show the Stadtholder's attempt to overcome his opponent with an attack in print.

However, the high pamphlet production cannot be considered only as propaganda from ideologically motivated authors. If we look at the booklets produced in the second stage of the conflict, we discover a significant shift in genres. After 30 July, intertextuality became a more prominent feature: Pamphlets gained their own dynamics, often reacting to each other and to the appearance of printed news in general. Close analysis of the form and content of poems and dialogues reveals that a successful form could direct the political discussion, by

⁶⁶ *Buer-praatje tusschen drie Amsterdammers, te weten: Claes, Ian, en Dirck-buer* (1650) Knuttel 6822.

⁶⁷ Dingemanse, *Rap van tong*, 170.

engendering more of the same pamphlets. If we consider the huge amount of pamphlets as a reflection of a discussion culture – as Frijhoff and Spies have argued – we must bear in mind that political opinions were often moulded in a popular form. In other words, we cannot assume that pamphlets objectively reflect a lively debate in the streets. Especially in the heat of a conflict, they represented an internal discussion, merely creating news instead of reflecting on political events outside the world of print.

Appendix: Pamphlet selection and analysis

Selection criteria

I have analysed all 1650 pamphlets in the Knuttel catalogue that are related to the quarrel between Amsterdam and William II. Manuscript pamphlets, as well as reprints (either printed under the same title, or under another title) were excluded. The result was a total of 132 original pamphlets.

*Analysis*⁶⁸

I have distinguished the following genres:

- News reports: Pamphlets written in prose that primarily function to inform about a certain event.
- Poems/Songs: Pamphlets written in verse.
- Dialogues: Pamphlets written in the form of a dialogue between one or more literary characters.
- Treatises: Texts written in prose that primarily function to persuade the reader, not directed to a specific reader.
- Letters: Texts written in prose that function to inform, or to persuade the reader, directed towards a specific addressee.
- Government publications: Pamphlets signed by the Stadtholder or a local government.
- Other.

Results

The table below gives the numbers of the pamphlets that I have analysed along with the genre of the pamphlet and date of publication.

⁶⁸ Of course, it is difficult to encode pamphlets entirely objectively. These problems have been thoroughly described by R. de Graaf, *Journalistiek in beweging. Veranderende berichtgeving in kranten en pamfletten (Groningen en 's-Hertogenbosch 1813–1899)* (Amsterdam, 2010), 372–373. However, some of the genre codes De Graaf used for his research on nineteenth-century pamphlets seemed to be useful for the encoding of seventeenth-century pamphlets as well. Therefore, I have adopted his classification and excluded the pamphlet genres that did not appear in the seventeenth century. See De Graaf, *Journalistiek in beweging*, 381–382.

Catalogue Number	Genre	Published before or after the siege of Amsterdam
Knuttel 6633	Gov. publication	Before
Knuttel 6635	Gov. publication	Before
Knuttel 6637	Letter	Before
Knuttel 6641	Letter	Before
Knuttel 6642	Letter	Before
Knuttel 6646	Letter	Before
Knuttel 6647	Letter	Before
Knuttel 6652	Letter	Before
Knuttel 6661	Letter	Before
Knuttel 6662	Gov. publication	Before
Knuttel 6669	Letter	Before
Knuttel 6673	Gov. publication	Before
Knuttel 6683	Letter	Before
Knuttel 6687	Letter	After
Knuttel 6693	Gov. publication	After
Knuttel 6696	Gov. publication	After
Knuttel 6697	Gov. publication	After
Knuttel 6698	Gov. publication	After
Knuttel 6704	News report	After
Knuttel 6706	News report	After
Knuttel 6707	Other	After
Knuttel 6709	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6711	Gov. publication	After
Knuttel 6712	Gov. publication	After
Knuttel 6713	Letter	Before
Knuttel 6716	Gov. publication	After
Knuttel 6717	Gov. publication	After
Knuttel 6720	Gov. publication	After
Knuttel 6721	Gov. publication	After
Knuttel 6723	Gov. publication	After
Knuttel 6724	Gov. publication	After
Knuttel 6726	Gov. publication	After
Knuttel 6727	Letter	After
Knuttel 6731	Gov. publication	After
Knuttel 6732	Gov. publication	After
Knuttel 6734	Gov. publication	After

Catalogue Number	Genre	Published before or after the siege of Amsterdam
Knuttel 6736	Letter	After
Knuttel 6739	Gov. publication	After
Knuttel 6740	Treatise	After
Knuttel 6744	Treatise	After
Knuttel 6747	Treatise	After
Knuttel 6753	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6754	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6756	Treatise	Before
Knuttel 6765	Treatise	Before
Knuttel 6767	Treatise	Before
Knuttel 6770	Treatise	Before
Knuttel 6771	Letter	After
Knuttel 6772A	Treatise	After
Knuttel 6773	Letter	After
Knuttel 6777	Letter	After
Knuttel 6780	Letter	After
Knuttel 6782	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6784	Treatise	After
Knuttel 6785	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6786	Gov. publication	After
Knuttel 6787	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6788	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6789	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6790	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6791	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6793	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6795	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6796	Other	After
Knuttel 6797	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6799	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6800	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6802	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6803	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6804	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6804A	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6805	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6806	Other	After

Catalogue Number	Genre	Published before or after the siege of Amsterdam
Knuttel 6807	Treatise	After
Knuttel 6810	Treatise	After
Knuttel 6811	Treatise	After
Knuttel 6813	Dialogue	After
Knuttel 6815	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6816	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6818	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6819	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6821	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6822	Dialogue	After
Knuttel 6824	Dialogue	After
Knuttel 6828	Dialogue	After
Knuttel 6829	Dialogue	After
Knuttel 6833	Dialogue	After
Knuttel 6837	Letter	After
Knuttel 6838	Letter	After
Knuttel 6839	Dialogue	After
Knuttel 6842	Dialogue	After
Knuttel 6843	Treatise	After
Knuttel 6847	Treatise	After
Knuttel 6848	Dialogue	After
Knuttel 6851	Dialogue	After
Knuttel 6852	Letter	After
Knuttel 6855	Letter	After
Knuttel 6856	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6857	Treatise	After
Knuttel 6861	Treatise	After
Knuttel 6862	Letter	After
Knuttel 6864	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6865	Dialogue	After
Knuttel 6868	Dialogue	After
Knuttel 6869	Other	After
Knuttel 6871	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6872	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6873	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6874	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6874A	Song/poem	After

Catalogue Number	Genre	Published before or after the siege of Amsterdam
Knuttel 6874B	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6875	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6876	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6880	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6881	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6882	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6883	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6884	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6885	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6887	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6888	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6889	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6890	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6891	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6892	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6893	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6894	Song/poem	After
Knuttel 6895	Other	After
Knuttel 6899	Dialogue	After
Knuttel 6900	Treatise	After
Knuttel 6906	Treatise	After
Knuttel 6906B	Song/poem	After

POLITICAL PAMPHLETEERING AND PUBLIC OPINION IN THE AGE OF DE WITT (1653–1672)

Guido de Bruin

Introduction

The Dutch Republic is often considered as a land of Cockaigne for printers, booksellers, gazetteers and pamphleteers. Their freedom of movement was indeed incomparable in the seventeenth century, though far from boundless.¹ As a consequence, tens of thousands of different pamphlets have been preserved, collected and described in a number of pamphlet catalogues. These cheap incidental publications of limited size about current affairs are a historical source of great importance. Historians and philologists have mostly used them to collect facts, illustrate attitudes of mind, analyse party strife and ideological differences and investigate literary topics. The political significance of pamphlets in relation to the public they were intended for has been given insufficient attention.

A difficult question

Political pamphleteering and public opinion were phenomena of unusual importance in the Dutch Republic, especially in the Golden Age. Holland was the centre of world trade and a marvel of urbanisation (two-thirds of the population lived in towns in the age of De Witt), with a relatively broad, literate middle class and hundreds of printers and booksellers. The Dutch Republic was also an eccentric state complex, with decentralised and representative institutions and few powers of enforcement. So political interest, discussion, news and comment in print had a chance to spread and public opinion a possibility to develop as nowhere else in seventeenth-century Europe.

¹ S. Groenveld, "The Mecca of authors? States Assemblies and Censorship in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch Republic," in *Too Mighty to be Free. Censorship and the Press in Britain and the Netherlands*, ed. A.C. Duke and C.A. Tamse (Zutphen, 1987), 63–86.

However, pitfalls are everywhere. How far were political interest and discussion disseminated in the Golden Age? Political interest and debate found response especially among the middle classes of Holland's towns, with offshoots in the main towns of other provinces, but are impossible to quantify. How far were pamphlets and gazettes disseminated in the Golden Age? The distribution and circulation of pamphlets and gazettes took place primarily among the same urban middle classes of Holland, but to what extent? A pamphlet edition might consist of 1000 copies, with large margins of uncertainty up and down. They were published predominantly in the principal centres of printing and bookselling, such as Amsterdam, Haarlem, Leiden, The Hague, Delft, Rotterdam, Dordrecht, Utrecht and Middelburg. From these centres the distribution resembled a stone thrown into the water. The great query is the factor of multiplication, the average number of readers of a pamphlet. This factor may be five, seven, ten or more; nobody knows. Moreover, the substance of a pamphlet can circulate without reading. As an indication, a reading public of 5,000 to 7,000 persons ($5-7 \times 1,000$) for a pamphlet edition seems a reasonable supposition. This is less than 2% of Holland's adult town-dwellers in the age of De Witt, with great local variations. So a pamphlet had to be reprinted and pirated at least three or four times to reach a substantial minority of Holland's citizens.

There are more pitfalls. What were the effects of oral rumours, written newsletters, printed gazettes and pamphlets in the Golden Age, both on their own and related to one another? On the whole, the impact of oral rumours, information and comment prevailed, especially at short notice, as is pointed out by contemporary sources. At the same time, the impact of pamphlets superseded that of written newsletters and gazettes when internal affairs were at stake. However, the effects of pamphlets are extremely difficult to isolate. And, finally, how should one define public opinion in the Golden Age, without circular reasoning? Public opinion in the Golden Age can be considered as the view of the majority of the middle classes in Holland's main towns, as indicated by contemporary voices and observers; not seldom several views contended for dominance. The temptation to deduce public opinion from the highest common factor of pamphlets, however, is often hard to resist for lack of other continuous sources concerning the collective state of mind in the seventeenth century. The impact of political pamphleteering on public opinion, the theme of this chapter, is almost impossible to determine.

In view of these difficulties the subject has been neglected and avoided by historians. The elusive attitude of Craig Harline, author of the only monograph about political pamphleteering in the Dutch Republic, is symptomatic of this situation. He argues that Dutch authorities from central to local level ascribed much impact to pamphlets, feared their effects on public opinion and political stability, tried to ban and control them, stimulated responses in print to them, took account of them and afforded the subjects an informal political influence.² He emphasises that the impact of political pamphleteering on public opinion was only a subjective perception of the government. He suggests, however, that this perception was an indication of real impact. My goal is to investigate this bold suggestion, concentrating on the era of John de Witt (1653–1672).³

The impact of political pamphleteering on public opinion can be investigated in several ways. First, all pamphlets published in the age of De Witt can be analysed systematically. This approach will disclose much about fluctuations, themes of interest, instigators, aims, and effects of political pamphleteering. Second, the influence of political pamphleteering can be examined in more depth by concentrating on a number of key moments. Generally, years of war and riot aroused more political debate and printed political comment than years of calm. Third, series of newsletters can be looked at over a longer period of time. This inquiry will disclose more about the importance of pamphlets as a source of information, comment and rumours. And fourth, explicitly forbidden pamphlets can be studied in more detail. This topic will help to clarify the view of Dutch authorities on the influence of political pamphleteering. All four methods of investigation will be tried more or less thoroughly to strengthen the outcome. Because gazettes concentrated on foreign news, pamphlets concerning foreign affairs will be dealt with marginally, as their impact intermingled. This study will focus on political issues of the Dutch Republic. The age of De Witt, the first stadtholderless era, was characterised by great dangers to the external and internal security of the state, as a result of wars,

² C.E. Harline, *Pamphlets, Printing and Political Culture in the Early Dutch Republic* (Dordrecht, 1987), 107, 111, 166, 230–231.

³ Despite my criticism of Harline, in the past I have taken for granted the impact of political pamphleteering on public opinion. G. de Bruin, *Geheimhouding en verraad. De geheimhouding van staatszaken ten tijde van de Republiek (1600–1750)* (The Hague, 1991), 402–435.

popular disturbances and faction disputes, as well as vehement debates and controversies concerning the necessity and value of the stadtholderate. In fact, ideological differences were more intense than at any other time between the culmination of the religious and political turmoil during the Twelve Years Truce (1617–1618) and the rise of the political movement of the Patriots (1780–1787). This era is suited to elucidate the importance of political pamphleteering.

Pamphlets: a quantitative approach

The number of pamphlets published in the age of De Witt is unknown. A reasonable indication is the collection of pamphlets in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in The Hague, described by W.P.C. Knuttel.⁴ One may assume that this collection contains at least 60% of all published pamphlets (from 1000 pamphlets printed in 1672 more than 600 have been included in Knuttel) and more than 95% of all issued important pamphlets. The total number of pamphlets from 1653 to 1672 described by Knuttel is 3679, that is 184 a year, including reprints, a significant indication of public interest and discussion as well as press activity. However, the number fluctuated enormously. The Year of Disaster, 1672, was unique, with 859 pamphlets, including reprints. The total number of pamphlets from 1653 to 1671 comes to 2820, that is 141 a year. So a closer examination of individual years is indispensable, starting from the premise that there was a certain correlation between the number of pamphlets and the extent of public interest and debate; after all, printers and booksellers wanted to make a profit.

1652	270	1659	163	1666	232
1653	138	1660	264	1667	195
1654	129	1661	118	1668	146
1655	137	1662	157	1669	64
1656	89	1663	152	1670	72
1657	108	1664	185	1671	72
1658	123	1665	276	1672	859

⁴ The following conclusions rest on an extensive investigation and analysis of the pamphlets of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek as described by W.P.C. Knuttel, *Catalogus van de pamflettenverzameling berustende in de Koninklijke Bibliotheek*, 9 vols (The Hague, 1978) [Reprint], vol. 2–1, 2–2 and 8. The pamphlets are indicated in this study by short title, year of publication and Knuttel number.

We can draw several conclusions from this table. Though 270 pamphlets were published in 1652, the First Anglo-Dutch War (1652–1654) had less impact on political pamphleteering and public interest than the Second Anglo-Dutch War (1665–1667). The naval battles of the second war fired the imagination more than the disastrous ones of the first war. Political pamphleteering and public interest during the Northern War (1655–1660) paled into insignificance beside those during the Anglo-Dutch Wars. The Restoration in England (1660), with its implications for political and economic relations with England and the future of William of Orange, fascinated the press and public. Political pamphleteering and public interest in the three years before 1672 were at an incomprehensibly low tide. Louis XIV's preparations for war did not produce more effects than William III's seclusion from the stadtholderate. All floodgates were flung wide in 1672, without prior notice. These sharp fluctuations illustrate that pamphlets were only published more than incidentally if there was an immediate need for political information and comment and that they were seldom meant as a contribution to a continuous political debate.

These general observations can be given concrete form by looking at the fluctuating number of pamphlets in Knuttel's catalogue concerning important subjects each year. The spread of pamphlets over, A) political news and comment about other countries, B) political news and comment about foreign affairs of the Dutch Republic, C) political news and comment about internal affairs of the Dutch Republic, D) news and comment concerning nonpolitical issues, is as follows in absolute and relative sense, though not all pamphlets can be classified categorically: see the table on the next page.

As this table illustrates, the number of pamphlets concerning the four categories fluctuated widely from year to year. These fluctuations were closely bound up with the quantity of political news. Crucial affairs in surrounding countries with political, economic and religious consequences for the Dutch Republic were followed with attention and interest by printers and booksellers as well as by the urban middle classes in Holland until 1663 (column A). That was especially the case with the English Civil War (1651–1655: 59 pamphlets), the Fronde in France (1651–1652: 28 pamphlets), the severe persecution of Waldensians in Piedmont (1655: 20 pamphlets), the Northern War in general (1655–1660: 83 pamphlets) and the Restoration in England, with its aftermath (1659–1661: 124 pamphlets; most pamphlets in 1659 were, however, written in English and intended for the English market).

Year	A	B	C	D
1652	23 (8.5%)	170 (63%)	58 (21.5%)	19 (7%)
1653	22 (16%)	82 (59.5%)	16 (11.5%)	18 (13%)
1654	26 (20%)	37 (29%)	46 (35.5%)	20 (15.5%)
1655	48 (35%)	8 (6%)	30 (22%)	51 (37%)
1656	31 (35%)	17 (19%)	8 (9%)	33 (37%)
1657	19 (18%)	43 (40%)	23 (21%)	23 (21%)
1658	45 (36.5%)	45 (36.5%)	7 (6%)	26 (21%)
1659	68 (42%)	76 (46.5%)	7 (4%)	12 (7.5%)
1660	79 (30%)	74 (28%)	95 (36%)	16 (6%)
1661	40 (34%)	50 (42%)	11 (9.5%)	17 (14.5%)
1662	20 (13%)	66 (42%)	33 (21%)	38 (24%)
1663	24 (16%)	24 (16%)	80 (52%)	24 (16%)
1664	8 (4.5%)	76 (41%)	17 (9%)	84 (45.5%)
1665	3 (1%)	202 (73%)	30 (11%)	41 (15%)
1666	3 (1.5%)	172 (74%)	35 (15%)	22 (9.5%)
1667	6 (3%)	140 (72%)	29 (15%)	20 (10%)
1668	7 (5%)	36 (24%)	57 (39%)	46 (31.5%)
1669	8 (12.5%)	9 (14%)	12 (19%)	35 (54.5%)
1670	4 (5.5%)	11 (15%)	27 (37.5%)	30 (42%)
1671	9 (12.5%)	16 (22.5%)	26 (36%)	21 (29%)
1672	9 (1%)	266 (31%)	554 (64.5%)	30 (3.5%)

After 1663 political pamphleteering and political interest with regard to other countries faded, not to return until 1685; only the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in France and the accession of James II in England aroused the languid press and public. Both concentrated on the affairs of the Dutch Republic.

The relations of the Dutch Republic with surrounding countries were followed with utmost attention by printers and booksellers as well as urban middle classes in Holland only when the security and welfare of the Dutch Republic, and Holland in particular, were at stake (column B). Public security and welfare were generally considered as two sides of the same coin, especially in times of war. Because war and the threat of war were a chronic problem for the Dutch Republic, political pamphleteering and public interest had little chance to waver. The era of De Witt started with the disastrous First Anglo-Dutch War

(1652–1654: 278 pamphlets). This shock was followed by other commercial and naval engagements: the Northern War (1655–1660: 191 pamphlets) and the fight against French privateering (1657: 20 pamphlets). After the Restoration there were again severe economic and political tensions with England (1661–1662: 51 pamphlets), resulting in the Second Anglo-Dutch War (1664–1667: 396 pamphlets) and the War against Münster (1664–1666: 83 pamphlets). The War of Devolution (1667–1668: 70 pamphlets) turned out to be a forerunner of the devastating attack in 1672 by France and its allies (1672: 171 pamphlets), the King of England (1672: 50 pamphlets) and the bishops of Münster and Cologne (1672: 38 pamphlets). The Year of Disaster was preceded by three years of absolute calm (1669–1671), the only years of rest apart from 1655–1656 and 1663.

The internal affairs of the Dutch Republic were not systematically followed by the press and public. They aroused significant interest in print only when the internal security and / or the position of the prince of Orange were at stake (column C). The naval wars against England forced the States General and the States of Holland to take numerous measures and led to blockade, unemployment, price increases, hunger, unrest and local revolt in Holland and Zeeland. These tensions were connected with the widespread cry to elevate the Prince of Orange to the functions of his ancestors. This double cause for agitation clarifies the number of pamphlets in 1652 (war: 29 pamphlets; Orange: 19 pamphlets), 1653 (Orange: 12 pamphlets), 1665 (war: 23 pamphlets), 1666 (war: only 7 pamphlets; Orange, including the *Buat-affair*: 26 pamphlets) and 1672 (war: 25 pamphlets; Orange: 524 pamphlets – this time, however, there was much more going on). This political pamphleteering and political interest appeared principally in the core provinces, Holland and Zeeland. Unrest and revolt in the outer provinces and towns concerned the press and public more than one would imagine, but only those on the spot. This is proven by the attention to the disturbances in Overijssel (1654–1657: 40 pamphlets) and several towns: Goes (1657: 12 pamphlets), Utrecht (1660: 40 pamphlets), and Groningen (1662–1663: 21 pamphlets).

The widespread affection for the Prince of Orange did not coincide with a constant, even rising, and extensive debate concerning his future position in the political system, as one would imagine. On the contrary, pamphlets were published in significant numbers only if a concrete inducement presented itself. Such a cause seemed the Act of Seclusion, Holland's exclusion of the Prince of Orange from the functions of his

ancestors under pressure from Cromwell, but in fact it was De Witt's *Deduction*, the official defence of the States of Holland's arbitrary policy, that really started a pamphlet battle (1654–1655: 33 pamphlets). Another reason for excitement was the Restoration in England, suddenly raising the gloomy expectations for the House of Orange (1660–1661: 52 pamphlets). The controversial book by the Leiden clothier and political theorist Pieter de la Court, *Interest of Holland* (1662), fulminating against the selfish and self-interested Princes of Orange and denying any value to the stadtholderate, with marginal notes by De Witt himself, also induced a heated pamphlet war (1662–1663: 43 pamphlets). It was the only incident in which a protracted ideological controversy on paper lacked an immediate political cause. The ideological dissension was fomented by the simultaneous resolution of the States of Holland to omit the Prince of Orange's name from the public prayer in Holland and De Witt's provocative defence of this decision (1663: 37 pamphlets), which dragged on into the following year (1664: 14 pamphlets).

The slumbering ideological discord on paper during the Second Anglo-Dutch War exploded only after the disastrous Two Days' Battle in August 1666, with the Orangist admiral Cornelis Tromp as a scapegoat, and the discovery of Buat's clumsy plotting to elevate the Prince of Orange (1666: 24 pamphlets). After the Second Anglo-Dutch War the States of Holland passed the Perpetual Edict, separating the stadtholderate from the supreme military command and abolishing the stadtholderate in Holland. This decree produced little response (1667: 12 pamphlets). The sudden admission of William of Orange as a first noble of Zeeland after his eighteenth birthday and the unwillingness of most provinces to accept Holland's separation of the stadtholderate from the supreme military command reheated the coals of ideological dissension on paper (1668: 36 pamphlets). After that it became miraculously quiet. Neither the vehement disputes between the provinces about the separation of civil and military functions of the Prince of Orange, nor the endless quarrels within the States of Holland concerning the conditions of his introduction in the Council of State and his nomination as a supreme military commander aroused any political debate on paper (1669–1671: 7 pamphlets). The Year of Disaster signified a somersault. The nomination of the Prince of Orange as a supreme military commander provoked a limited response (24 pamphlets). His forced elevation to the stadtholderate of Holland and Zeeland caused an outburst (61 pamphlets). All floodgates were flung

wide, however, only after the main object had been attained; then the ideological discord on paper reached its zenith (334 pamphlets). The Orangists launched a massive assault on their opponents, focusing on the brothers De Witt, who fell victim to an atrocious lynching party (219 pamphlets). The adherents of True Freedom were on the defensive (47 pamphlets). The pressures from citizen soldieries, oral rumours and publications resulted in a change of government in Holland, consolidating the position of the Prince of Orange (105 pamphlets).

Generally, external dangers had much more impact on political pamphleteering and public interest in the Dutch Republic than internal dissension. War, the threat of war, the ups and downs of war and the implications of war occupied the public imagination with an intensity seldom reached in debates over the position of the Prince of Orange. Of course, external dangers had internal consequences. Yet the pressures of public disorders and press activities to elevate the Prince of Orange were quite limited in the First and Second Anglo-Dutch Wars. The number of Orangist pamphlets sank into insignificance before the number of patriotic utterances. The black swan was the Year of Disaster. Although the Dutch Republic in 1672 was in greater danger than at any moment in its existence, ideological dissension predominated after the immediate collapse; hundreds of different Orangist pamphlets flooded the streets and eroded the waning authority of regents from central to local level. This strange coincidence has insufficiently been noticed and needs clarification. I shall come back to this point.

Pamphlets can also be categorised on the basis of their contents. Three main varieties can be distinguished: (a) literal reproductions of state papers, such as proclamations, declarations, regulations, important decisions, treaties, diplomatic memorials, military and maritime newsletters and judicial sentences, (b) more or less neutral news reports concerning princely installations, military and naval operations, battles and naval battles, spectacular and sensational events, revolts and so on, and (c) subjective commentaries on political questions and events. Although not all pamphlets can be classified with certainty, the annual division of these three varieties within the categories (A) external and internal policy of foreign countries, (B) external policy of the Dutch Republic, and (C) internal policy of the Dutch Republic is as follows in the age of De Witt: see the table on the next page.

As this table demonstrates, an astonishing number of state papers were issued as pamphlets in the Dutch Republic. In fact more state papers than news reports and political commentaries combined were

Year	A			B			C		
	a	b	c	a	b	c	a	b	c
1652	16	3	4	52	24	94	34	3	18
1653	8	5	9	26	13	43	6	0	10
1654	11	6	9	23	0	12	32	0	14
1655	21	7	9	6	2	0	24	0	6
1656	13	9	9	16	0	1	6	0	2
1657	11	2	6	30	1	11	18	2	3
1658	19	12	11	32	4	9	5	2	0
1659	12	10	46	59	3	14	2	2	3
1660	22	19	37	58	5	11	40	5	47
1661	10	6	20	34	11	5	5	1	5
1662	9	4	1	50	8	6	12	0	21
1663	6	11	3	18	0	1	41	4	35
1664	4	2	2	54	7	15	2	0	15
1665	3	0	0	100	19	78	27	0	3
1666	3	0	0	74	36	58	16	0	17
1667	2	0	4	64	15	60	16	2	9
1668	2	2	3	21	3	11	27	6	24
1669	4	1	2	4	5	0	10	0	2
1670	0	4	0	6	2	3	19	0	8
1671	4	3	2	4	2	10	19	0	5
1672	0	3	3	70	60	133	140	32	381

published during the De Witt era, according to Knuttel's catalogue. A lot of state papers were printed and distributed by government institutions. As a consequence they were frequently not neutral documents, but coloured and partisan libels. The object of declarations of war was to explain the attitude of the government, to win the population to its side and to lay all the blame at the door of the enemy. Treaties were printed to make public conditions of peace, to which the population had to adhere, and sometimes important details of negotiations. Military and naval reports were spread to clarify a confused situation, to rectify false rumours and to give a favourable version of events. Important resolutions had to be published to inform the inhabitants of these decisions and also to explain why they had been taken. Diplomatic responses were made public by the States General when foreign ambassadors and envoys anonymously distributed memorials and petitions

presented to the Dutch Republic to inform and influence public opinion and to forestall defective editions because of the lack of secrecy. Criminal sentences were sometimes made public to inform and admonish the population, to prevent repetition and to buttress state power. Generally princes, statesmen and institutions exploited political pamphleteering to instruct people, to influence public opinion and to strengthen state power.

Of course, central, provincial and local authorities were not alone in printing and distributing state papers. Printers and booksellers also took part in the game, trying to satisfy and stimulate public interest and public opinion and to make some profit, exploiting the lack of secrecy in the Dutch Republic. To get an idea of the impact of government intervention it is possible to determine the number of state papers issued in pamphlet form by authorities year by year. One can establish: (a) definite government publications, with the involvement of the public printer Van Wouw, and later Scheltus, as a crucial indication; (b) presumable government publications; (c) assessed number of government pamphlets related to the total number of pamphlets; and (d) percentage of government pamphlets related to the total number of pamphlets. The results are as follows: see the table on the next page.

As this table clarifies, the percentage of government pamphlets related to all pamphlets fluctuated between 2% and 30% without visible reason. All sorts of motives led to government intervention. As a point of departure Dutch authorities rejected the printing and distributing of pamphlets that were considered as disturbing, slanderous, undermining and rebellious. Therefore all pamphleteering without government censorship was prohibited time after time; however, the phenomenon was beyond control in a state with local autonomy and hundreds of printers and booksellers. So Dutch authorities joined in the press battle, not only to react and prevent, but also to enlighten, warn, influence and quiet the public and to imprint government authority. In fact, they accepted political pamphleteering and exploited it. Undoubtedly they ascribed impact on public opinion to the phenomenon, but they were not as scared of it as the terrifying prohibitions suggested.

News reports were much less often published as a pamphlet than one would expect, though Knuttel's catalogue may not be representative. Important and spectacular events in foreign countries were the subject of gazettes. The Restoration was the only occasion to arouse a flood of pamphlet accounts. Diplomatic affairs of the Dutch Republic seldom lent themselves to pamphlet reports. Military affairs were

Year	A	B	C	D
1652	37	10	47/270	17%
1653	16	5	21/138	15%
1654	33	5	36/129	30%
1655	21	4	25/137	18%
1656	4	1	5/89	6%
1657	9	16	25/108	23%
1658	3	3	6/123	5%
1659	1	2	3/163	2%
1660	14	10	24/264	9%
1661	4	2	6/118	5%
1662	9	4	13/157	8%
1663	17	11	28/152	18%
1664	14	7	21/185	11%
1665	32	18	50/276	18%
1666	31	18	49/232	21%
1667	14	12	26/195	13%
1668	3	11	14/146	10%
1669	3	0	3/64	5%
1670	11	1	12/72	17%
1671	5	3	8/72	11%
1672	55	27	82/859	10%

another thing. The famous naval battles during the Anglo-Dutch Wars and the astonishing and shocking invasion of the French army in 1672 occupied public interest and produced an avalanche of eye-witness accounts. Issued as pamphlets or special gazette editions, they satisfied and stimulated the widespread public interest. Pamphlet reports concerning internal affairs were thin on the ground. Regents disliked and dismissed political interference; so printers, gazetteers and booksellers were not able to publish and distribute current internal political news. This news had to be reserved for secretly written and spread newsletters that were circulated to a limited number of customers. Pamphlet reports remained confined to important and exciting occurrences, such as disturbances and moves of the House of Orange. The Year of Disaster was an isolated instance with numerous accounts of the civil troubles in most towns of Holland and Zeeland.

Pamphlets commenting on political issues were less common than suggested in historiography. Frequently important events in foreign

countries failed to elicit printed comments. The Restoration in England was an exception once again. Of course, a considerable part of the stream of pamphlets was printed for the English market, but there was also a wide audience in the Dutch Republic, who rightly regarded the accession of Charles II as a turning-point in relations with England and in the future of the Prince of Orange. A similar phenomenon can be observed regarding the foreign affairs of the Dutch Republic. The Anglo-Dutch Wars and the Year of Disaster were the only occasions when numerous pamphlets appeared in the street with violent reactions to and debates on foreign issues of the Dutch Republic. War mobilised public interest and discussion, patriotism and political pamphleteering as no other topic.

The principal subject of pamphlet commentaries on internal political issues was the future position of the Prince of Orange. There was, however, not a constant flood of such libels as one would assume. Pamphleteering for and against the Prince of Orange was liable to sharp fluctuations and insignificant much of the time. During the First Anglo-Dutch War the number of pamphlets demanding and rejecting the nomination of the Prince of Orange to the functions of his ancestors was astoundingly low. A vehement debate sprang up only after the peace was concluded, especially when De Witt launched his provocative *Deduction*, which had the effect of a bomb-shell. After this episode affection and support for the Prince of Orange were at their lowest ebb; for years he seemed in a state of suspended animation. Public opinion and political pamphleteering scarcely paid attention to him. His rebirth was due to the Restoration; political pamphleteering, adapting to the circumstances, met the public demand and played on the public interest.

However, the Restoration did not signify the transition to a continuous and animated debate on the Prince of Orange. The flood of pamphlets for and against the stadtholderate a few years later, following the publication of the provocative *Interest of Holland* by De la Court, was an isolated case. A simple explanation for the sudden outburst is not available. Public interest was only thinly involved, as few pamphlets were reprinted and pirated. So it seems to have been an intellectual debate on paper with a clear ideological character, like the De Witten War in 1757. The flood of pamphlets after the decision of the States of Holland to change the public prayer was mainly provoked by De Witt's unnecessarily challenging defence. Pamphlets championing the adolescent Prince of Orange were ostentatiously absent during the Second Anglo-Dutch War until August 1666. After the Two Days' Battle, a

disaster ascribed by partisans to the irresponsible behaviour of the Orangist admiral Tromp, and the discovery of the treacherous proceedings of Buat, just a few pamphlets commented upon the delicate situation and fomented the shocked public sentiments; only some fanatic adherents of True Freedom were very vocal. The pamphlet reactions to the Perpetual Edict were equally uninspired; neither adherents of Orange, nor those of True Freedom had any reason to rejoice. Public opinion and political pamphleteering were much more interested in the unexpected admission of the Prince of Orange as a first noble in Zeeland, considering it as an encouraging step to restoration of the stadtholderate. Nothing happened, however; as a consequence public interest faded away. There was no pamphlet debate concerning the position of the Prince of Orange in the calm before the storm.

So the Year of Disaster was not the culmination of a continuous pamphlet debate for and against a stadtholderate and the Prince of Orange; during the last years before 1672 the discussion was as dead as a doornail. In 1672 more than half again as many pamphlet commentaries concerning this issue were published than in the preceding twenty years combined. Moreover, the spread, impact and heat of these pamphlets were incomparable. The subject was also changing. The principal goal of Orangist pamphleteering from July 1672 was no longer the elevation and glorification of the Prince of Orange, but the denunciation and demonisation of the principal representatives of True Freedom, concentrating pamphlet attacks on the De Witt brothers and, after the repulsive lynching, on their main adherents in Holland's municipal governments. The sudden metamorphosis and intensification of political pamphleteering cannot be regarded as a spontaneous process. The malicious intention must have been to eliminate the principal opponents of the new stadtholder and his associates, orchestrated by the Prince and his entourage or his creatures on their own, acting according to his supposed wish. The influence of political pamphleteering on public opinion was in any case unprecedented during this violent year.

How many best-sellers were among the thousands of pamphlets published during the De Witt era and what was their nature? A definitive answer is only possible after all Dutch pamphlet collections have been compared and integrated, a life-work. The extensive collection of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek affords, however, a reasonable view, in

absolute as well as relative terms, though this collection may not be representative and the margins of uncertainty may be considerable. The following table presents (a) the number of pamphlets of which three or four editions have been preserved in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek; (b) the number of pamphlets of which five or more editions have been preserved in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek; (c) the number of pamphlets among (a) and (b) concerning foreign and internal affairs of the Dutch Republic; (d) the number of state papers issued as a pamphlet by Dutch authorities among (a) and (b); (e) the number of state papers issued as a pamphlet by private persons among (a) and (b); (f) the number of political commentaries issued as a pamphlet by private persons among (a) and (b); (g) the number of best-sellers among (a) and (b) as a percentage of all pamphlets without reprints.

Year	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
1652	11	4	11-4	6	2	7	7%
1653	3	-	2-1	-	1	2	2%
1654	2	2	3-1	2	2	-	4%
1655	2	-	2-0	2	-	-	1%
1656	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
1657	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
1658	1	-	1-0	-	-	1	1%
1659	2	-	2-0	2	-	-	1%
1660	7	5	5-7	8	1	3	5%
1661	2	-	2-0	2	-	-	2%
1662	3	2	4-1	4	-	1	4%
1663	7	-	3-4	4	-	3	5%
1664	4	1	4-1	3	-	2	3%
1665	8	4	12-0	10	1	1	5%
1666	8	8	13-3	10	1	5	9%
1667	4	2	5-1	5	-	1	4%
1668	3	-	1-2	1	1	1	2%
1669	1	-	0-1	1	-	-	2%
1670	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
1671	1	-	1-0	-	-	1	1%
1672	40	18	11-47	7	2	49	9%

This table needs to be handled with great caution. If all pamphlet editions from all Dutch pamphlet collections are considered, the number of pamphlets issued at least three or five times would be much higher. How much higher? Michel Reinders has recently gathered more information with regard to all pamphlets from 1672 and concludes that 870 pamphlets were issued once or twice (87.5%), 76 pamphlets issued three or four times (7.5%) and 50 pamphlets published five or more times (5%).⁵ This implies that fewer than 50% of the pamphlet best-sellers from 1672 can be identified on the basis of the collection of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek. However, the Year of Disaster is an exceptional case. It seems obvious that the number of pamphlet best-sellers each year was very limited and most pamphlets were not best-sellers at all. Apart from 1672, a significant number of widely circulating pamphlets came off the presses only in the well-known years 1652, 1660, 1665 and 1666. And even in times of crisis one in eight to ten pamphlets at best was published three or more times and one in twenty, at the utmost, five or more times. So the vast majority of pamphlets had a tiny reading circle and scarcely any impact on public opinion. Of course, a battery of pamphlets issued once or twice reinforces each other, but such an effect is visible only in 1672, an exceptional year in every respect.

This table illustrates above all that the prevailing best-sellers of political pamphleteering in the Dutch Republic were state papers issued by government institutions. This observation is rather amazing. Official pamphlets were printed and distributed in numerous editions and widely bought, read, discussed and disputed, as appears from letters and pamphlets. Their impact on public opinion was normally considerable, because of the authority of the government. Dutch government institutions deliberately published state papers to inform, enlighten, impress, and enlist the public and to contradict the regents of other provinces and towns as well as the public at large. These unspoken intentions and destinations were multifarious and contradictory, but apparently that did not bother the regents. They directed their informative and enlightening pamphlets as well as defensive and offensive ones to their fellow-regents and the inhabitants without much attention to unintended side effects. Some government libels were indistinguishable from vitriolic private pamphlet commentaries. Yet the regents published

⁵ M. Reinders, "Printed Pandemonium. The Power of the Public and the Market for Popular Political Publications in the Early Modern Dutch Republic" (PhD diss., Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2008), 46.

these libels, arousing and stimulating pamphlet wars. We therefore must assume that regents were not nearly so disturbed by the possible effects of political pamphleteering as one would expect on the basis of the severe prohibitions. Only in 1672 did they lose their hold on political pamphleteering; numerous best-sellers with fierce political commentaries were issued by private persons. They had an extreme influence on public opinion and contributed to the elevation of the Prince of Orange and the overthrow of the De Witts and their adherents.

Pamphlets: a qualitative approach

Some crucial moments from the internal pamphlet strife in the age of De Witt will be considered in more detail to trace the impact of political pamphleteering on public opinion. Special attention will be paid to the summer of 1653, the summer of 1654, the autumn of 1666, the summer of 1667 and the summer of 1672, all moments directly or indirectly connected with the wars against England and France, the most shocking and threatening events in the age of De Witt. Apart from the question of war and peace, four factors were of great importance in the pamphlet strife. Did pamphleteering take place in a time of riot or relative calm? Were public authorities or private persons the prime movers behind pamphleteering? Was the objective of printing activities to fight provincial and local élites or to enlighten, entertain and incite the public? And, lastly, how many pamphlets were printed and spread in how many editions? From the answers to these questions we can draw some conclusions about the impact of political pamphleteering on public opinion.⁶

The First Anglo-Dutch War ended fatally, with the lowest ebb in the summer of 1653. The English fleet was blockading the Dutch coast and the Dutch Republic was reduced to the last extremity. One pamphleteer among many moaned:

Unfortunate Netherlands! Whose harbours besieged, whose merchants pass away, all trades are at a standstill, the herring-boats lie ashore,

⁶ As a background to the following observations P. Geyl, *Orange and Stuart* (London, 1969) is useful, paying much attention to political pamphleteering, but starting from the old-fashioned view of a party strife between Orangists and their opponents. For factual information J. Wagenaar, *Vaderlandsche historie, vervattende de geschiedenissen der vereenigde nederlanden, inzonderheid die van Holland van de vroegste tyden af*, 21 vols, 2nd edition (Amsterdam, 1770), vols 12, 13 and 14 are still indispensable.

whaling has been stopped, thousands of men disappear like snow, the disorders, troubles, discontents grow daily more and more, all authority fades away, the respect is out of the country, there is no news other than taking ships, reducing inhabitants to poverty, a total ruin is threatening everywhere.⁷

De Witt's letters and Aitzema's newsletters speak the same gloomy language. The economic collapse, combined with naval defeats and public disrespect, stimulated rebelliousness in many towns of the maritime provinces Holland and Zeeland, accompanied by the cry to appoint the two-year-old Prince of Orange to the office of captain-general and his unreliable Frisian cousin to the office of lieutenant-general. Under great pressure the States of Zeeland and Gelderland, acclaimed by those of Friesland and Groningen, proposed the promotion of the Prince and his cousin, but the States of Holland turned down the plan immediately. These decisions were printed as a pamphlet to pacify the population and put pressure on Holland; so Holland did the same to argue for provincial sovereignty and public authority, defying the will of most allies and its inhabitants while deploring those allies at the mercy of the people. Yet no province wanted to force the issue; publishing took place on a limited scale and with little drive. Private pamphleteering was also of little importance. Four pamphlets for and against the Prince of Orange have been included in Knuttel's catalogue. A fanatical Orangist libel accused Holland's principal regents of betraying the country and Calvinist church order; this potential hand grenade was immediately forbidden in Holland, but reprinted in Zeeland.⁸ A moderate Orangist pamphleteer voiced a widespread conviction by rejecting the Frisian stadtholder William Frederick as a capable and reliable lieutenant-general.⁹ A short hymn of praise on True Freedom was a mere nothing, yet it was reprinted several times.¹⁰ An appeal for concord was too impartial and uninspiring to fall on fertile soil.¹¹ None of the pamphlets was a best-seller. The impact of political pamphleteering on public opinion was negligible.

⁷ *Ondeckinghe van den Nederlandtschen cancker* (1653) Knuttel 7441, 2.

⁸ *Ondeckinghe*, 7441. This pamphlet was reprinted in Zeeland: *Ontdeckinghe van den tegenwoordigen standt onses vader-landts* (1653) Knuttel 7462. The reprint has not been noticed by Knuttel.

⁹ *Sedich ondersouck* (1653) Knuttel 7457.

¹⁰ *Den Hollandschen Catechismus* (1653) Knuttel 7458, 7459, 7460.

¹¹ *Onpartydige examinatie* (1653) Knuttel 7463, 7464.

In the summer of 1654 the peace-treaty with England was at stake, depending on Holland's handing over of the Act of Seclusion to Cromwell. The secrecy of the agreement became a mockery within a few days because of the treason of De Witt's chief clerk and the resistance of five voting towns in Holland. Holland's arbitrariness toward the allies and complaisance toward Cromwell corresponded suspiciously with its predispositions and raised a storm of protest in the other six provinces as well as in the streets of Holland. The States of Friesland, Zeeland and Groningen made vehement declarations in the States General, accusing the States of Holland of violating the alliance and ignoring the interests and rights of the House of Orange and denouncing the inner circle of Holland as the secret instigator of the agreement. They also printed and spread these declarations, with the aim of winning the people to their side and putting pressure on Holland.¹² The States of Holland demanded their withdrawal and reacted fiercely. De Witt drafted a long *Deduction*,¹³ urging the necessity of the Act of Seclusion, with an unprecedented wealth of details and secret state papers as unverifiable pieces of evidence. The *Deduction* mainly consisted, however, of an endless oration in praise of Holland's absolute sovereignty and True Freedom, denying any rights to the States General and the allies and the House of Orange. Nobody seems to have realised that the eulogy completely undermined the preceding demonstration of the necessity to accept the Act of Seclusion. The *Deduction* demonstrates the firm hold the adherents of True Freedom had on Holland's government institutions at the time. It was printed as a pamphlet in many editions and widely spread among the regents of the allies and Holland and among the burghers of Holland's towns. Undoubtedly the number of copies printed reached 10,000 to 15,000. The first goal was to exonerate the States of Holland and Holland's inner circle from involvement in the Act of Seclusion. The second aim was to impress absolute provincial sovereignty upon the allies and unlimited provincial authority upon the inhabitants, without taking into account the fury and frustration of the other provinces and the Orangist sensibilities of the population. The majority of the States of Holland wanted to show its indifference to the feelings of the allies and the inhabitants and its determination to go its own way.

¹² A. de Wicquefort, *Histoire des Provinces-Unies des Païs-Bas*, 4 vols (Amsterdam, 1861–1874), vol. 2, 304.

¹³ *Deductie* (1654) Knuttel 7543–7549. See De Bruin, *Geheimhouding en verraad*, 368–369.

Provincial animosity and envy within government circles induced a pamphlet strife in which the population was also involved. The impact of the *Deduction* was psychologically considerable, but practically limited; the States of Holland rightly assessed the situation when they published their paper bomb-shell. This extraordinarily partisan and explosive pamphlet from Holland's political nerve centre was widely read and discussed by regents in Holland and the other provinces. It strengthened the anger and distrust of institutions and regents in the outer provinces against their supreme ally. Though a sharp public condemnation of and reaction to the *Deduction* was discussed in all provinces, no response was ultimately published. The other provinces realized that fierce declarations would produce no effect and would poison mutual relations and that they needed Holland much more than vice versa. Moreover, none dared to endanger or turn back the peace-treaty with England. The *Deduction* was also widely read and discussed in the streets and other places, especially in Holland. De Witt's unprecedented exposure of state secrets was a dangerous course for a regime prohibiting public discussion of state affairs, as some contemporaries noted. Aitzema wrote in a newsletter: "A statesman said, those of Holland by the publication of their deduction have made the people judge; the people being judge, they might likewise be made to execute the same" – an ominous verdict.¹⁴ The Act of Seclusion was a slap in the face to the predominantly Orangist population of Holland and the *Deduction* was a new offence against shattered Orangist sensibilities. Unrest broke out in many towns of Holland, in connection with the Act of Seclusion or not, but no one wanted to undo the economically salutary peace with England.

The widespread oral debate on the *Deduction* was a marked contrast to its limited discussion in the press. The number of pamphlets published in connection with the *Deduction* and included in Knuttel's catalogue can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Moreover, none was printed in more than one or two editions. The only serious response emanated, symptomatically, from a Zeeland outsider, dismissed out of hand by De Witt.¹⁵ Though his considerations are superficial, lacking

¹⁴ *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe*, 7 vols (London, 1742), vol. 2, 519–520. Aitzema's newsletters include much information about the response of the outer provinces and the population in Holland to De Witt's *Deduction*.

¹⁵ *Brieven van Johan de Witt*, ed. N. Japikse, R. Fruin and G.W. Kernkamp, 4 vols (Amsterdam, 1906–1913), vol. 1 (1913), 251.

inside information, they are a faithful reflection of the feelings of Orangist and anti-Holland circles.¹⁶ Two other reactions are of little value, like a response from 1655.¹⁷ Some pamphleteers from Holland mopped the floor with the considerations from Zeeland.¹⁸ And there the matter rested. Within two months the *Deduction* and the Act of Seclusion were “almost forgotten, and no more spoken of”.¹⁹ The States of Holland could participate in the war on paper and force the issue against the States of other provinces with sovereign contempt for the influence of political pamphleteering upon public opinion.

The Second Anglo-Dutch War compared favourably with the disastrous previous one. The economic impact was less serious, victories and defeats succeeded each other, Holland's regents were more firmly in the saddle and disturbances failed to come. By making the Prince of Orange ‘child of state’ in 1666, the majority of the States of Holland managed to take the wind out of the sails of the regents in- and outside Holland and parts of the population who wished to promote him, without giving him clear prospects. So the outbreak of ideological dissension after the unfortunate Two Days' Battle came as a surprise. The defeat led to a flaming row between De Ruyter and Cornelis Tromp, each blaming the other, the one a loyal servant of the government and the other a fanatical Orangist. The quarrel split the crew on the fleet and the crowd in the street; patriotic feelings exploded and mingled with party-spirit. The discord fomented pamphleteering. Kievit, a regent from Rotterdam and Tromp's brother-in-law, published, with the help of Tromp's brothers and sisters, a slanderous libel, putting all the blame on De Ruyter, aiming to increase the dissension and to fish in troubled waters. The States of Holland forbade this potential bomb-shell immediately and investigated the case without delay.²⁰ At the same time the awkward plotting with England of double agent Buat to elevate the Prince of Orange accidentally came to light, with Kievit as his link in government circles. Fanatical partisans of True Freedom directly exploited the shocked feelings of patriotism by publishing pamphlets to connect Tromp, Kievit and Buat and all Orangists in one

¹⁶ *Bedenckingen* (1654) Knuttel 7550, 7551.

¹⁷ *Korte vragen en antwoorden* (1654) Knuttel 7552; *Copie van de onkosten* (1654) Knuttel 7553; *Contra-Deductie* (1655) Knuttel 7659.

¹⁸ *Korte aanteeckeninge* (1655) Knuttel 7660; *Wederlegginge* (1655) Knuttel 7661.

¹⁹ *State Papers*, vol. 2, 637.

²⁰ R. Prud'homme van Reine, *Schittering en schandaal. Biografie van Maerten en Cornelis Tromp* (Amsterdam, 2000), 260–270.

great conspiracy with England, aiming to discredit their opponents and to strangle all efforts to promote the Prince. The first pamphleteer, deeply impressed by the discovery of Buat's actions, had the longest run. His libel was edited numerous times, without being forbidden. He accused all adherents of a stadtholderate of, like Tromp and Buat, not rejecting treason to reach their aim.²¹ A second pamphleteer, writing after the execution of Buat, was more moderate. He sincerely doubted the treachery of Tromp and pointed to Kievit and his associate Van der Horst as the real culprits. If they could be arrested other offences of Orangists would be discovered.²² A third pamphleteer endorsed this view; in his view a man like Tromp could not be deeply involved in the plot. He foresaw that the Prince of Orange would lose much ground because of the affair.²³

The prophecy was already coming true. Orangist pamphleteers soon fell silent. The vitriolic libel against Tromp and the Orangists evoked two furious reactions, but they came to little and were printed only once.²⁴ A moderate Orangist was much more representative; his pamphlet was reprinted many times. He also ruled out the treacherous conduct of Tromp, but was not prepared to defend Buat or the Orangists generally. On the contrary, he expected that a traitor like Buat would soon get what he deserved. Shocked patriotism prevailed.²⁵ This feeling was shared by most Orangists. Few were prepared to promote the Prince of Orange by collaborating with a public enemy of the state. Nobody knew the ramifications of the Orangist conspiracy; so caution was required. This attitude was stimulated by the States of Holland. Without delay Tromp was dismissed, because his conduct after the defeat added to the dissension in the fleet. Immediately the tempest evaporated. A newsletter noted ten days later: "hardly anybody talks about it longer (...) The authority of the state has been augmented".²⁶ So most pamphlet discussions on Tromp were behind the times and had other purposes, as indicated. After the wavering Court of Holland had been animated twice by the States of Holland to punish such capital

²¹ *Den oprechten Hollandsen bootsgezel* (1666) Knuttel 9330–9333, 40.

²² *Schuyt-praatje* (1666) Knuttel 9339, 9340.

²³ *Het tweede deel* (1666) Knuttel 9341, 9342, 31.

²⁴ *Op de valsche leugen* (1666) Knuttel 9334; 't *Vergif gelicht vanden Hollandtsen Boots-gesel* (1666) Knuttel 9334a.

²⁵ *Onpartijdige samenspraec* (1666) Knuttel 9335–9338.

²⁶ *Bescheiden uit vreemde archieven omtrent de groote Nederlandsche zeeoorlogen 1652–1676*, ed. H.T. Colenbrander, 2 vols (The Hague, 1919), vol. 1, 483.

crimes severely and swiftly, at last Buat was beheaded. The sentence was carefully formulated, repeatedly printed as a pamphlet and widely spread. All emphasis was laid on the external and internal security of the state. Buat was found guilty of secret correspondence and collaboration with the enemy, disclosure of state secrets, undermining of the alliance between the Dutch Republic and France, fomenting of discord within the state and infringement of government authority.²⁷ The sentence said not a word about Buat's motive: The promotion of the Prince of Orange. Orangist sentiments were deliberately thrust into the background. Private and public pamphleteering pursued more or less the same objectives: To promote state and government authority, to warn against conspiracy with the enemy and to kill Orangist attempts to elevate the Prince of Orange. These goals were attained. Political pamphleteering reflected and influenced a fierce public discussion in the street this time; it animated patriotism, loyalty to the state and stability of the government.

The Second Anglo-Dutch War ended in the glorious expedition to Chatham. There was, however, no time for rejoicing. Before the peace of Breda, Louis XIV invaded the Southern Netherlands. The keystone of Dutch foreign policy was at stake: France as a friend, but not as a neighbour. The deplorable state of the Dutch army had to be improved by appointing general officers. Immediately regent cliques inside and outside Holland brought the Prince of Orange into play and paralysed the decision-making process. To break the stale-mate the partisans of True Freedom had to make concessions and to give concrete form to the vague prospects of the 'child of state'. Endless discussions within Holland's inner circle followed. The result was the Perpetual Edict, separating the military office of captain-general from the political function of stadtholder, abolishing the stadtholderate in Holland and predestining the Prince of Orange to the office of captain-general. This compromise was too much for dogmatic adherents of True Freedom and much too little for rigid Orangists. Yet all regents of Holland had to accept it and swear an oath on the decision. The Edict was printed as a pamphlet in more editions and widely spread. The contents were amazingly factual. All ideological presentation, unlike in De Witt's *Deductions* from 1654, 1657 and 1663, was omitted. The Edict stated its intention to advocate liberty and preserve unity and peace, followed by

²⁷ *Sententie* (1666) Knuttel 9422–9425.

a number of articles and the oath.²⁸ The decision-making process had taken place in absolute secrecy; so the outcome was a shock to Orangist sentiments. The Edict was widely discussed and generally considered as a hard blow to the Prince of Orange. One would expect a violent pamphlet strife, but nothing happened. Two notorious partisans of True Freedom published an eulogy on the Perpetual Edict, the one a superficial poem about peace and liberty, the other a vehement libel about the dangers of the princes of Orange and Orangism. Again Tromp, Kievit, Buat and their accomplices passed in review and all Orangists were represented as “haters of their fatherland and disturbers of the public rest”.²⁹ Orangist pamphleteers were silent. How is this to be explained? The regents of Holland did not involve the population in their struggle for power this time and aspired to harmony. Second, government authority was nearly unattainable in the aftermath of Buat and Chatham. The Edict was also a compromise, difficult to interpret, with positive and negative points for partisans of both sides. And lastly, the Orangists were shocked by the Buat affair and discredited by their involvement in it. So political pamphleteering had not much impact on public opinion.

The Year of Disaster is a unique case. The crushing defeat at the hands of the overwhelming French armies led to a military, political and mental collapse of the Dutch Republic. As an old saying runs: The crowd was senseless (*redeloos*), the government desperate (*radeloos*) and the country irrecoverable (*reddeloos*). A country half-occupied, an army in disarray, a government divided and demoralized and a multitude in shock and panic proved to be a dangerous cocktail. Three waves of popular risings inundated Holland and Zeeland, accompanied by an unprecedented flood of pamphlets.³⁰ The incessant stream of rumours, oral tidings and written and printed news reports about surrendering towns and fortresses, withdrawing and disintegrating military forces and negotiating and surrendering regents stirred masses of burghers in the last week of June 1672. The influence of political pamphleteering is difficult to isolate; 120 different pamphlets were printed in June, in

²⁸ *Perpetuel Edict* (1667) Knuttel 9578, 9579.

²⁹ *Dubbele victorie* (1667) Knuttel 9587, 9588, 29–31.

³⁰ D.J. Roorda, *Partij en factie. De oproeren van 1672 in de steden van Holland en Zeeland, een krachtmeting tussen partijen en facties* (Groningen, 1961) provides indispensable background. Political pamphleteering is described in great detail by Reinders, “Printed Pandemonium”, with in many respects another interpretation than in my study.

general factual state papers and news reports and patriotic lamentations about the desperate situation issued in few editions, not inflammatory libels. The princes of Orange were glorified in many pamphlets as the principal defenders of the "hard-bought liberty" and William III was idealised as a mythical saviour. Political pamphleteering appears a feeble reflection of oral communication.³¹ Riots from one town to the other, with the citizen soldiery as a powerful weapon of the burghers, coerced the regents to revoke the Perpetual Edict and to elevate the Prince to the functions of his ancestors within ten days.

As soon as the threat of an immediate French attack on Holland diminished, the question of guilt began to dominate public discussion. The sudden collapse of such a mighty state without much resistance seemed incredible. Why was the army in such a deplorable condition? Why was the state so isolated? Why was the resistance so weak? Why was the government so defeatist? From the beginning the regents were regarded as the main culprits, especially the adherents of True Freedom, who had determined policy until 1672. Many towns in Holland and Zeeland entered a state of chronic unrest, with burghers and citizen soldiery insisting on a purge of the government and undermining its authority and aristocratic factions fighting to maintain or improve their position. Local circumstances were of paramount importance. Political pamphleteering, however, concentrated on general issues and had a dynamic of its own. Patriotism and Orangism mingled in a closely reasoned argument, supported by a pseudo-historical legitimization. According to this political myth, the adherents of True Freedom had from beginning to end been driven by hatred of the princes of Orange and had betrayed the country and sold it to Louis XIV instead of elevating William III to his rightful functions, pushing Charles II into the arms of France. The dubious negotiations of Pieter de Groot with France and the arbitrary withdrawal of his brother-in-law de Montbas from the front line were considered as a confirmation of this betrayal. The Act of Seclusion, the sentences of Buat and Kievit and the Perpetual Edict were viewed in the same distorted light, colouring the historiographical image. The continuous stream of pamphlets was immense. The astonishing number of 450 different pamphlets appeared in July and August. Most of these libels emanated from private authors,

³¹ These conclusions are based on a random test from pamphlets published in June 1672.

accompanied by vehement and vitriolic political commentary and printed in numerous editions. Incessantly the same Orangist vision, with variations, was propagated and pressed. The attack concentrated increasingly on John and Cornelis de Witt, apart from De Groot, dragging their names through the mud. Pamphlets defending the adherents of True Freedom in general and the brothers De Witt in particular were completely overwhelmed by the tide of attackers. John de Witt, who had always ignored the phenomenon, felt even compelled to publish five or six pamphlets to defend his good name and that of his brother, without avail. This process of demonisation by pamphleteering created the climate in which the repulsive lynching by a minority of the citizen soldiery of The Hague could take place.³²

Undoubtedly the Prince of Orange and his entourage played an important part in this extraordinary and well-timed pamphlet and demonisation campaign, with Fagel as a spider in the web. The campaign was too massive, fanatical, diabolical and well-planned to have been a coincidence. Unfortunately, the exact part played by William III and his collaborators is impossible to determine. All widespread pamphlets give the impression of having originated with private burghers without political experience or intellectual gifts. However, they could have been instigated by William III's entourage or animated by partisans, prepared to act in his spirit and to do the dirty work for him. The goal of the maleficent pamphlet campaign was to eliminate the principal opponents of the Prince and his associates as quickly as possible. William III himself had no scruple about attacking Holland's regents, leaving them to their fate, exposing De Groot to popular fury, humiliating John de Witt and implicating his brother Cornelis in a fabricated murder attempt upon his life, all charges fully played out in public and the press. Fagel, soon to be Grand Pensionary of Holland, did not shrink away from publishing as a pamphlet a letter full of falsehood by Charles II to William III, denouncing the partisans of True Freedom as the only cause for his participation in the war. A lynching party was the logical outcome. Planned or not, this outcome of their hate campaign suited William III and Fagel splendidly and was immediately exploited. By way of popular risings and political pamphleteering the adherents of True Freedom were threatened with the same fate

³² These conclusions are based on a random test from pamphlets published in July and August 1672, consisting of pamphlets in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek issued three or more times.

as the brothers De Witt. So the decision to give William III the power to change the town governments was driven through the States of Holland within a week.

The change of government in Holland's and Zeeland's voting towns was accompanied by a complicated struggle for power and places between William III and his brokers, local aristocratic factions and local citizen soldieries in September. Local controversies and issues dominated the scene. William III and his entourage and aristocratic factions were active in the wings. The third wave of popular risings led by citizen soldieries aimed not only to purge government but also to increase popular influence and control. Political pamphleteering was principally an attendant phenomenon and a reflection of popular riots. Heated ideological debates gave way to factual news reports, lists of popular demands, lists of old and new members of town governments and local bickering. Printed reports, demands and government lists were an impetus and example to other towns, but the influence of political pamphleteering seems to have been diminished. Though 162 different pamphlets were issued in September, their contents, length, impression and impact are incomparable with those of the preceding months.³³

Newsletters: a modest investigation

The influence of political pamphleteering on public opinion can also be examined by analysing a series of newsletters. In the age of De Witt important Dutch state-affairs which could not be published by gazetteers and pamphleteers were regularly sent by several news suppliers from The Hague to foreign consumers. For more than fifteen years the well-known news supplier and historian Lieuwe van Aitzema provided political information to the English secretaries of state Thurloe and Arlington every week, including in times of war.³⁴ His 'letters of intelligence' to Thurloe in 1653–1654, included in *A Collection of State Papers*, are worth a closer inspection. No one has painted a more penetrating picture of the desperate situation in Holland during the summer of 1653 and the climate of opinion after the presentation of

³³ These conclusions are based on a random test from pamphlets published in September 1672.

³⁴ See for Aitzema: De Bruin, *Geheimhouding en verraad*, 471–493.

the *Deduction* in the autumn of 1654. In the newsletters from 1653 political pamphleteering played an insignificant role. In May 1653 Aitzema noted the publication of a dialogue between two persons concerning current affairs and a few sentences of captains convicted because of cowardice in the last naval battle.³⁵ Two months later he observed that the States of Holland “do cause many of their resolutions to be printed, to show their zeal, duty, and diligence in this war, against the false reports and rumours, which have been published amongst the people to their blame and prejudice”.³⁶ Two months later he remarked that the States of Holland had printed their decision against the elevation of the Prince of Orange.³⁷ Despite all rebelliousness and Orangism the regents of Holland seemed in control of political pamphleteering, defending their policy and pacifying the population.

In his newsletters from 1654 Aitzema paid much more attention to political pamphleteering. Numerous times he brought up de Witt's *Deduction*, mentioning its coming, passage, substance and impact and the animosity and resistance it aroused. For months it was his main news item. In his eyes the regents of Holland took a chance by making public such a controversial state paper. Popular seditious lay in waiting: “if those, who govern Holland, do not look to it closely, they are in danger”.³⁸ Moreover, the other provinces would draft fierce reactions, “which also will be printed, and so much the worse, for the manifesto being rude, the answer will be so too, and coming to the view of the tumultuous people, who continue still their affections to the house of Orange, so far that they already threaten to cut off councillor pensionary of Holland de Witt, for being author of that manifesto”.³⁹ However, the States of Holland did not lose their hold on political pamphleteering and the other provinces refrained from issuing a refutation of the *Deduction*, to Aitzema's amazement. Partisans of the Prince of Orange and of True Freedom published “some invective libels”, which were “immediately prohibited”.⁴⁰ In practice libels against the Prince and his adherents remained unimpeded. The States of Friesland lamented that “daily scurrilous libels by seditious persons were printed and spread against, and to the great prejudice and dishonour of, the Prince of

³⁵ *State Papers*, vol. 1, 254.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 342.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 461.

³⁸ *State Papers*, vol. 2, 520.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 537.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 592.

Orange, and the whole house of Nassau”, and they wanted the prohibitions to be carried out.⁴¹ The States of Holland reacted quite differently upon the publication of *Considerations upon the Deduction*; they “took such a good course and order to suppress it, that there is not one to be had of them”, even by Aitzema.⁴² Amsterdam employed the same methods to suppress a dialogue against peace with England, which denounced Cromwell as a regicide and partisans of True Freedom as poisoners of William II in 1650.⁴³ Despite all the disturbances and Orangism, Holland’s regents seemed able to exercise effective supervision over political pamphleteering, arousing and crushing it at will.

Aitzema’s fame as a historian is founded on his voluminous contemporary work *Affairs of State and War*,⁴⁴ in essence a series of newsletters illuminated with state papers. The value he attached to pamphlets can be illustrated by a closer inspection of the number and nature of pamphlets included in his historical work. The following table enumerates (a) the number of pamphlets inserted in *State and War*; (b) the number of pamphlets concerning foreign countries within (a); (c) the number of pamphlets concerning foreign affairs of the Dutch Republic within (a); (d) the number of pamphlets concerning internal affairs of the Dutch Republic within (a); (e) the number of state papers and private pamphlets with commentary within (a); and at last (f) the number of state papers within (a) as a percentage of the total number of state papers issued as a pamphlet according to Knuttel: (see the next page).⁴⁵

This table elucidates the overwhelming importance Aitzema attached to state papers, one category of pamphlets. Most state papers included in *State and War* and published as a pamphlet were related to foreign affairs of the Dutch Republic: Declarations of war, peace treaties, defensive and commercial alliances, letters of sovereigns to the States General and vice versa, memorials and orations of envoys, reports of naval battles by commanders, and so on. A smaller number of state papers of this nature refer to internal affairs of the Dutch Republic: Resolutions concerning the navy, proposals and decisions concerning the Prince of Orange and sentences relating to the security of the state. Interest in

⁴¹ Ibid., 666–667.

⁴² Ibid., 715.

⁴³ Ibid., 253.

⁴⁴ L. van Aitzema, *Historie of Verhael van Saken van Staet en Oorlogh in ende ontrent de Vereenigde Nederlanden (...)*, 14 vols (The Hague, 1657–1671).

⁴⁵ The following table rests on information provided in the notes by Knuttel, *Catalogus*, vol. 2–1 and 2–2.

Year	a	b	c	d	e	f
1652	11	0	6	5	11-0	11/102 = 11%
1653	5	0	2	3	4-1	4/40 = 10%
1654	13	2	4	7	12-1	12/66 = 18%
1655	9	2	3	4	8-1	8/51 = 16%
1656	5	0	5	0	5-0	5/35 = 14%
1657	15	3	9	3	15-0	15/59 = 25%
1658	14	8	6	0	14-0	14/56 = 25%
1659	16	0	16	0	16-0	16/73 = 22%
1660	33	6	17	10	33-0	33/120 = 27%
1661	10	1	7	2	10-0	10/49 = 20%
1662	17	3	9	5	17-0	17/71 = 24%
1663	28	1	6	21	28-0	28/65 = 43%
1664	29	1	19	9	29-0	29/60 = 48%
1665	28	1	17	10	28-0	28/130 = 22%
1666	32	8	17	7	32-0	32/93 = 34%
1667	30	5	15	10	30-0	30/82 = 37%
1668	22	5	9	8	22-0	22/50 = 44%

private pamphlets, news reports and political commentary was negligible; only two reactions to the *Deduction* appear in *State and War*. Aitzema's attitude cannot be attributed to the ban on unauthorised political issues. The publication of contemporary state papers was forbidden as severely as that of private libels with political commentary. State papers had, however, an aura of authority, objectivity, faithfulness and importance shared by no other political information. This conviction found general acceptance and determined the attitude to political pamphleteering, except in times of extreme crisis.

Aitzema was a professional newsletter writer, running an office with a number of clerks, transcribing state papers and multiplying newsletters. His main sources of information were state papers and oral data provided by regents and envoys. The Catholic lawyer Adriaan van der Goes was an amateur newsletter writer, sending political information from The Hague to his brother Willem in Vienna weekly for fourteen years, mostly abstaining from writing in times of war for fear of prosecution. His main sources of information were rumours, tidings, letters and gazettes. He seldom mentioned pamphlets. Some state papers issued as a pamphlet about foreign affairs caught his attention because

of their curiosity or value: A letter of Charles II to the States General with false expressions of peace during the Second Anglo-Dutch War and a neutralising reaction of the States General, a report of Cornelis de Witt to the government on the victory at Chatham and two letters of Louis XIV and Charles II concerning the War of Devolution.⁴⁶ Other pamphlets which excited his interest referred to the ideological strife between adherents of the Prince of Orange and True Freedom; these were the most vitriolic libels issued in 1668 and 1669.⁴⁷ Van der Goes gives the impression of not being really interested in their contents; he mentioned them more as a curiosity, amusing to read, noting the suppression of Orangist pamphlets and the freedom to lampoon the opposition in Holland. Some other pamphlets were noted only as a curiosity: One was a mockery of Louis XIV and the other a sentence concerning selling of state papers in Holland in which two regents from outer provinces were attacked.⁴⁸ Most noteworthy is the absolute silence Van der Goes observed with regard to the stream of pamphlets in the summer of 1672. He remarked only two days before the lynching of the De Witts in their own residence: "Here an incredible number of libels and lampoons are appearing". All floodgates were opened, according to him, by the evasive answer of William III to De Witt's request to restore order.⁴⁹

Forbidden pamphlets: some remarks

In principle all writing, printing, selling and spreading of unauthorised pamphlets, especially state papers and libels with commentary on political issues and government activities, was severely forbidden in the Dutch Republic. In practice the impact of such prohibitions was limited; their endless repetition speaks volumes. It proved impossible to prevent and exterminate political pamphleteering. More measures were needed to control the phenomenon. To begin with, certain pamphlets were explicitly prohibited, persecuted and suppressed. Their number was astonishingly low. In the age of De Witt a fraction of the thousands of published pamphlets was at stake: 12 pamphlets related

⁴⁶ *Briefwisseling tusschen de gebroeders Van der Goes (1659–1673)*, ed. C.J. Gonnet, 2 vols (Amsterdam, 1899–1909), vol. 1, 265, 277, 320, 462.

⁴⁷ Gonnet, *Briefwisseling*, vol. 1, 403, 475, 488, 526, 530; vol. 2, 69, 71.

⁴⁸ Gonnet, *Briefwisseling*, vol. 1, 310; vol. 2, 147.

⁴⁹ Gonnet, *Briefwisseling*, vol. 2, 401.

to foreign affairs, mostly offending foreign countries and statesmen, and 13 pamphlets referring to internal affairs, principally offending certain regents or admirals and the ruling regime in general.⁵⁰ Numerous libels as hazardous to external and internal security as the expressly forbidden ones were left undisturbed. Pamphlets were mostly persecuted by coincidences, such as complaints from foreign envoys, complaints from regents and changes of government. This attitude confirms the impression that regents did not consider pamphlets as dangerous as the rules against them indicate. On the other hand, more pamphlets were persecuted and suppressed than formal decisions suggest, as is illustrated by the cited newsletters of Aitzema and Van der Goes, and in the prevailing climate of fear many pamphleteers gave up intentions of publishing. Sources to demonstrate this important point are unfortunately missing. Government institutions could also issue pamphlets themselves as an antidote, not shrinking from manipulating public opinion with tendentious information.

Conclusion

The conclusion seems obvious. Though the subject is surrounded by pitfalls, the impact of political pamphleteering on public opinion must not be exaggerated. The limited number of pamphlets on each topic, the limited edition and circulation of most pamphlets, the prohibition of pamphleteering in general, the persecution and suppression of pamphlets, the fear of prosecution, the printing of pamphlets by authorities to neutralise false and partial information, all are indications and warnings to be cautious. Even in times of war the impact of political pamphleteering paled into insignificance beside that of economic misery, political restlessness and oral communication. One gets the impression that provincial and town governments had more control of political pamphleteering than has been assumed in the historiography. Hence the States of Holland and other provinces were willing to exploit political pamphleteering to defend provincial interests and to fight their opponents, using or ignoring the population. The Year of Disaster

⁵⁰ This conclusion rests on an analysis of W.P.C. Knuttel, *Verboden boeken in de Republiek der Vereenigde Nederlanden* (The Hague, 1914), with a supplement in I. Weekhout, *Boekencensuur in de Noordelijke Nederlanden. De vrijheid van drukpers in de zeventiende eeuw* (Haarlem, 1998), 381–385.

stands on its own, unjustly regarded as an example of the considerable impact of political pamphleteering. This year is unparalleled, even compared with 1618, 1650 and 1684, other turning-points in the Golden Age, when political pamphleteering also got out of control in the wake of a crisis of authority. In those years pamphlet strife was primarily instigated by regents from Holland and the Prince of Orange with his clientele. In 1672 it was a more spontaneous process, aroused by pamphleteers from the urban middle classes, though William III and his entourage played an important, but obscure, role. This insolubility is characteristic of the complex relationship between political pamphleteering and public opinion: It is a fascinating, but elusive subject and so it will remain.

‘THE CITIZENS COME FROM ALL CITIES WITH PETITIONS’
PRINTED PETITIONS AND CIVIC PROPAGANDA IN THE
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Michel Reinders

Introduction

In an attempt to make sense of Dutch political culture, William Temple wrote that one of the foundations of Dutch politics was that local governments in the Dutch Republic had to take public opinion into consideration, especially in appointing new magistrates. Local regents, claimed Temple, tried to “maintain their authority with less popular envy or discontent, [by giving] much to the general opinion of the people in the choice of their magistrates”.¹ Public opinion consequently mattered greatly to these politicians. One of the ways by which regents tried to influence public opinion was by producing huge numbers of popular publications, which led one contemporary Dutch author to remark: “Everywhere, pamphlets came down like rain”.² Equally important, however was a movement from citizens in the direction of government through petition. These petitions were so widely spread in the Dutch Republic in 1672 that one contemporary claimed that “the citizens come from all cities with petitions”.³

In contrast to these comments by contemporaries, historians who have studied the 1670s and 1680s have long stressed ‘political scheming’ as the defining characteristic of political culture in the Dutch Republic in this period. Political participation, public opinion and a burgeoning civic movement, the three foundations of the Year of Disaster 1672, have played only a minor role in scholarly research of the period.⁴ After 1672, the Prince of Orange supposedly surrounded

¹ W. Temple, *The Works of sir William Temple*, ed. J. Swift, 4 vols (London, 1814), vol. 1, 113–114.

² *Wederlegging-gedicht, Van het Lasterschrift, Genaemt, Verhael van ’t voornaemste* (1672) Knuttel 10387, 7.

³ *’t Hollands Venesoen in Engelandt gebacken, Wederleyt* (1672) Knuttel 10618, 7.

⁴ Cf. P. Knevel, “De politiek op straat. Over de vormen van stedelijk politiek protest in de zeventiende eeuw,” *Groniek* 30 (1997); A.F. Salomons, “De rol van de Amsterdamse

himself with a small group of reliable men, with whom he worked on the basis of personal instead of constitutional arrangements.⁵ By using the newly obtained right to purge local governments, William succeeded in getting his 'creatures' appointed to strategic positions and consequently successfully excluded his opposition.⁶ So, while William did not visibly change the Dutch political structure, he changed how it worked.⁷ This period has been contrasted with the period of the 'popularly governed' True Freedom (1654–1672).⁸ Under William III, the Dutch Republic was heading towards monarchy.⁹ As a consequence, while his creatures guarded the Orangist interests at home (led by Grand Pensionary Gaspar Fagel), the newly appointed Orangist ambassadors and agents made it almost impossible to cross William in foreign policy.¹⁰ By exception, Amsterdam has been described as the only remaining bastion of opposition to the Orangist design.¹¹ What, however, happened to the men who had supported the Prince of Orange in

burgerbeweging in de wetsverzet van 1672," *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis van Nederland* 106:2 (1991): 213.

⁵ D. Roorda, "Willem III, de Koning-Stadhouder," in *Rond prins en patriciaat. Verspreide opstellen door D.J. Roorda*, ed. S. Groenvelde and H. Mout (Weesp, 1984), 142.

⁶ Simon Groenvelde typified William's reign as: "he retained the old political structures but worked with his own people on the side. He had his own informal networks. Ambassadors no longer sent their important news to the States General, but to William himself. The Orangist court became more influential than ever." S. Groenvelde, *Evidente factiën in den staet. Sociaal-politieke verhoudingen in de 17^e-eeuwse Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden* (Hilversum, 1990), 60–63.

⁷ William obtained a majority in the *besognes* and the cities in Holland. Moreover, he had massively increased his influence in Utrecht, Gelderland and Overijssel as a consequence of the new constitutions (*regeringsregelementen*) that these provinces had agreed to on re-entering the Union. M.A.M. Franken, *Coenraad van Beuningen's politieke en diplomatieke activiteiten in de jaren 1667–1684* (Groningen, 1966), 33–35. Robert Fruin has claimed that William III succeeded in amassing more political power "than any of his forefathers." Apart from the new constitution, Fruin also stressed the importance of the new instruction for Grand Pensionary Gaspar Fagel, who was now formally obliged to report "everything" to the Stadtholder. R. Fruin, *Geschiedenis der staatsinstellingen in Nederland tot den val der Republiek* (The Hague, 1980), 289–296. Cf. J.L. Price, *Dutch Society 1588–1713* (New York, 2000), 229.

⁸ For one, the assumption that political debate in pamphlets reached its peak during the period of the True Freedom is false. The Knuttel catalogue indicates that the period 1654–1671 saw the appearance of 2914 pamphlets, which was an average of 171 pamphlets each year. The period 1672–1688, saw the appearance of 3802 pamphlets, which was an average of 238 pamphlets each year.

⁹ L.J. Rogier, "De Ware Vrijheid als oligarchie, 1672–1747," in *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, ed. D.P. Blok et al., 15 vols (Utrecht/Antwerpen, 1954), vol. 7, 196.

¹⁰ Franken, *Coenraad van Beuningen*, 33–35.

¹¹ G.H. Kurtz, *Willem III en Amsterdam 1683–1685* (Utrecht, 1928).

1672? What happened to the citizens who had rioted against the Prince's enemies? Did public petitioning, the novelty in Dutch political culture in the early 1670s, come to a shrieking halt after the purges of 1672? The burgher movement of 1672 did not lead to any democratic changes in the Dutch Republic.¹² On the contrary, citizens and their demands, grievances and popular tendencies were cast aside by William after 1672.¹³ According to Daan Roorda, Dutch citizens lost all political power after the Year of Disaster.¹⁴

The abovementioned comments from William Temple and his contemporaries thus seem out of place. The dawn of the age of public opinion and petitioning that they described presupposes widespread political participation. In this article I will argue that these men were not mistaken. A close examination of the use of printed petitions in the Dutch Republic reveals that there is a need to redefine the nature of the period.¹⁵ During the 1670s and 1680s Dutch politicians were indeed increasingly obliged to justify their policies before "the general opinion of the people", as Temple hinted at. As it turns out, 1672, the Year of Disaster, appears to have been a watershed in Dutch history.

The public revised

Recent scholarly research has rightly emphasised the importance of pamphlet literature for the development of propaganda, self-fashioning and shifting political ideologies. In opposition to revisionists who focussed on (political) elites, this strand of historiography has shown how politicians tried to use the press to influence the political

¹² P. Geyl, "Democratische Tendenties in 1672," in *ibid.*, *Pennestrijd over Staat en Historie. Opstellen over de Vaderlandse Geschiedenis aangevuld met Geyl's levensverhaal*, ed. P. Geyl (Groningen, 1971).

¹³ Roorda, *Partij en Factie*, 244–246.

¹⁴ D. Roorda, "The Ruling Classes in Holland in the Seventeenth Century," in *Britain and the Netherlands* vol. 2, ed. J.S. Bromley and E.H. Kossmann (1964), 109–132. Renier has claimed that William had disappointed his supporters after 1672. G.J. Renier, *De Noord-Nederlandse Natie* (Utrecht, 1948), 244–245. According to Jonathan Israel, after 1675 William distanced himself from the people and relied on his system of favourites. J.I. Israel, *The Dutch Republic. Its Rise, Greatness and Fall 1477–1806* (Oxford, 1995), 796–806.

¹⁵ Elizabeth Edwards has rightly opposed historians who have claimed that the Prince of Orange's political power became practically absolute after 1672. According to Edwards the change was more subtle. Influence groups emerged that tried to influence policy by stressing their own interests. E. Edwards, "An unknown Statesman? Gaspar Fagel in the Service of William III in the Dutch Republic," *History* 87:287 (2002): 358.

public, to change attitudes and to cause events to turn out in their favour.¹⁶ In this article, I argue that members of this public participated themselves in the writing, drafting, and publishing of oppositional political pamphlets. This political participation can be traced most clearly in printed petitions. As it turns out, such a role could be successfully adopted only after 'the public' had been granted the role of judge on (partisan) political issues. In other words, citizens started to engage in political propaganda that was aimed at politicians only after these politicians had first sought the favour of citizens themselves. In the Dutch Republic, this role of the public was most clearly established during the Year of Disaster. More precisely, the shift occurred between January and July 1672. Not coincidentally, 1672 was also the time that large amounts of printed petitions appeared on the market for popular political publications.

To be sure, petitioning had been a custom among Dutchmen long before 1672. Petitioning was in essence a sign of obedience, because the petitioner recognised the government that he sent his request to as his authority. The men who published petitions, however, did something else. They put authority in the hands of an anonymous audience, public opinion if you will, and consequently removed authority (or a part of it) from government. Normally these petitions, or *requests* as the Dutch called them, would be handed over to the government in manuscript. After the *requestmeester* had decided what to do with it, the demands were returned to the supplicants. An audience was normally not involved.¹⁷ In 1672, this changed. Now, petitions were abundantly published and presented to an anonymous audience. These petitions were accompanied by pamphlets that argued in favour of the

¹⁶ Cf. J. Stern, *Orangism in the Dutch Republic in Word and Image, 1650–75* (Manchester, 2010); M. Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation in later Stuart Britain. Partisanship and Political Culture* (Oxford, 2005); J. Peacey, *Politicians and Pamphleteers. Propaganda during the English Civil Wars and Interregnum* (Aldershot, 2004); J. Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2003); T.C.M. Blanning, *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture. Old Regime Europe 1660–1789* (New York, 2002); D. Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture. Printing, Petitions, and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*, (Princeton, 2000); W. Frijhoff and M. Spies, *1650. Bevochten eendracht* (The Hague, 1999); A. Halasz, *The Marketplace of Print. Pamphlets and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1997); S. Pincus, *Protestantism and Patriotism. Ideologies and the Making of English Foreign Policy, 1650–1668* (Cambridge, 1996); C.E. Harline, *Pamphlets, Printing and Political Culture in the Early Dutch Republic* (Dordrecht, 1987).

¹⁷ H. van Nierop, 'Private Interests, Public Policies. Petitions in the Dutch Republic,' in *The Public and Private in Dutch Culture of the Golden Age*, ed. A.K. Wheelock and A. Seeff (Newark, 2000).

citizens' cause and formed a theoretical justification of their behaviour. Taken together, we could say that these publications form an exemplary case of civic propaganda.

Recently, it has been argued by David Zaret that printed petitions set in motion a change in political communication from a practice based on secrecy and privilege to an open system based on the authority of public opinion that caused the advent of democratic culture.¹⁸ As I argue here, the use of political communication by pamphleteering and petitioning in the Dutch Republic in the late seventeenth century did something quite different. Indeed, it led to a political culture with a high level of participation. But that political culture was at the same time exclusive, bigoted, xenophobic and in many ways conservative. The people that were most active during the 1670s and 1680s – those citizens who actually did the rioting and who filed the petitions – had a political ideology that was based on the idea of a contract between regents and governed. This idea of a political contract, however, was not only rooted in a philosophical debate about the origins of government with its mythical contract.¹⁹ It was also based on actual contracts, most importantly on the oath that citizens had to take at city hall promising to fulfil certain duties and, in exchange, being granted certain rights and privileges.²⁰ Consequently, given a choice, these citizens favoured inequality to equality. Considerable parts of society (non-citizens) were deemed incapable of taking part in politics, even of participating in political debate. One had to be part of the political contract to have a voice in politics. As a consequence, none of the citizens who published pamphlets during the 1670s and 1680s had an outspoken preference for a democracy that resembles our ideas of democratic freedom and equality. Instead, they argued for a proper execution of the political structure of the Dutch Republic wherein the power of the regents, who only represented sovereignty, was kept within bounds by the combined power of the citizens and the stadtholder.²¹

¹⁸ Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture*. For discussion see Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation*.

¹⁹ For an outline of the role of contracts in the debate about the origin of government see A. John Simmons, "Theories of the state," in *The Cambridge Companions to Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. D. Rutherford (Cambridge, 2006).

²⁰ Cf. Conal Condren, *Argument and Authority* (Cambridge, 2005).

²¹ Cf. Van Nierop, "Private Interests, Public Policies," in *The public and Private*, ed. Wheelock and Seeff; J. Pollmann, "Eendracht maakt macht. Stedelijke cultuurijsden en politieke werkelijkheid in de Republiek," in *Harmonie in Holland. Het poldermodel van 1500 tot nu*, ed. D. Bos, M. Ebben and H. te Velde (Amsterdam, 2007).

In the remainder of this article I will firstly explain the different functions and uses of petitions in the Dutch Republic. Secondly, I will describe how particular events caused the people who drafted these documents to start to see themselves as “the foundation of Dutch politics” in 1672. Lastly, I will show how this episode in Dutch history changed Dutch political culture in the 1670s and 1680s. As it turns out, printed petitions created among Dutch citizens a custom to turn to the weapon of popular propaganda in dire times to secure their interests in opposition of the interests of those in power.

Print and petitions

As hinted at in the beginning of this article, the growing importance of the public in Dutch politics is in several ways the opposite of the image of a government that ruled top-down during the last decades of the seventeenth century as it has been commonly seen. Daan Roorda, for one, has claimed that petitions were generally “without result” and should consequently not be taken seriously. They were mere “mutterings” from people who could ask, but who could not demand. Not all demands in petitions, as has been stressed, were granted.²² Moreover, many contemporary political theorists and critics described the inability of non-governing groups in society to successfully oppose government.²³ Of course, looked at from a twentieth-century point of view, there is a sense in which non-governing groups in early modern society were very unsuccessful in influencing their governments through deliberation. The fact that these late seventeenth-century citizens did not get all their demands granted, did not break the power of their governments and did not replace it with a modern elective democracy based on equality should not lure us into thinking that they were completely unsuccessful. On the contrary, a large part of the violent citizens who saw some of their demands met in the fall of 1672 stopped rioting. Apparently, enough demands had been met.²⁴

²² Cf. Roorda, *Partij en factie*, 241; Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 796–806; G. de Bruin, “De geschiedschrijving over de Gouden Eeuw,” in *Kantelend Geschiedbeeld. Nederlandse historiografie sinds 1945*, ed. W.W. Mijnhardt (Utrecht, 1983), 115; Renier, *De Noord-nederlandse natie*, 243; W. Troost, *William III, The Stadholder-King. A Political Biography* (Aldershot, 2005), 96.

²³ U. Huber, *De Spiegel van Doleantie* (1672) Knuttel 10591.

²⁴ M. Reinders, *Gedrukte Chaos. Populisme en moord in het Rampjaar 1672* (Amsterdam, 2010).

There is a second and arguably more serious problem with petitions. Historians have rightly suggested that petitions could be tools in the hands of politicians to influence decisions and justify policy. The composing of petitions could be "encouraged from above" or they could simply be made up by pamphleteers. We actually know of the existence of such mock-petitions. It could even be argued that mock-petitions appeared on the market for popular political publications simply to make money.²⁵ There is, in short, a tension between the petition as a tool for civic propaganda and as a tool for the manipulation of the citizenry.²⁶ Petitions could reflect public opinion, but they could also pose as public opinion in an effort to become a self-fulfilling prophecy. And there is more to add to the methodological problems thus created. As it turns out, several petitions that were put on the market were not published by the men who drafted and filed the petitions. Instead, politicians who had agreed to (some of the) demands published these documents to flaunt their cooperation with popular movements. In doing so, these politicians did not only empower the petitioning citizens, they also stabbed at those of their colleagues who had not granted demands. This feature of petitioning – "creating the other" – stimulated partisanship in politics, as Mark Knights has remarked.²⁷

From the abovementioned one could conclude that petitions were no more than rhetorical tricks from clever publicists who wanted to feign support for certain policies. This, however, would be a most unfortunate conclusion. As we try to define the function of the petition we should refrain from falling into a dichotomy (and subsequently forcing ourselves to choose) between propaganda schemes that were meant to deceive the audience on one side and a reflection of actual debates in society on the other. Obviously there are examples of both in early modern history, but the groups are by no means exclusive.

²⁵ Jason Peacey has argued that "contemporary accusations and evidence both suggest that petitions were sanctioned, supported and organised centrally". Peacey, *Politicians*, 252. Contemporaries also recognised the danger of "parrot petitions". Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture*, 233.

²⁶ Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture*, 220–228. "In England, there is evidence of political leaders in Parliament using petitions to create the appearances of support for their policies". T. Harris, "Propaganda and Public Opinion in Seventeenth-Century England," in *Media and Revolutions*, ed. J. Popkin (Lexington, 1995), 66.

²⁷ Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation*.

To make sense of these different functions of the petition, we have to distinguish between printed petitions and petitions that were filed in manuscript. The latter consisted exclusively of citizen's demands, but had little effect outside of the locality because these productions were, as far as historical evidence shows, hardly ever spread on a large scale. On the contrary, they were returned to the people who had filed them after government had decided what to do with the grievances. Printed petitions were spread more widely, of course, but this form also ran a greater risk of being abused by governments. When we look at the available source material, however, it appears that this abuse should not be overrated in the Dutch context. Most petitions that were published, even if they were put on the market by governmental bodies, were literal translations from the original manuscript editions. A petition that cried for political reform that was, for example, handed over to government in Rotterdam during the summer of 1672 was heavily debated in the city council. In addition to recording the conclusion of the debates, the town secretary also copied the demands of the document into the books of the city council. The petition that was published and the one claimed to be the petition that the citizens had filed were indeed exactly the same.²⁸ Out of a body of nearly fifty printed petitions in 1672, only two seem to have had orchestrated, or mock versions.²⁹ In short, there is evidence for mock-, or parrot petitions, which supports the argument that governments believed in the power of the political audience. This does not, however, convincingly prove that petitions were produced by Dutch governments on such a large scale that we should discount them as reflections of debates in society.³⁰ Moreover, from what we can gather from correspondence and diaries, contemporaries were sensitive to the danger of mock petitions. If we have a look at what contemporary authors had to say about petitioning, the binding element in these comments was the fact that petitioning was an enterprise by citizens, not that it was a propaganda tool in

²⁸ Gemeentearchief Rotterdam (GAR), 1.01, 791, and GAR, 1.01, 28.

²⁹ Reinders, *Gedrukte chaos*.

³⁰ On the contrary, the two diaries that we have of this particular period both mention and discuss original versions, they do not speak about the altered versions. See J.F. Gebhard, "Een dagboek uit het rampjaar 1672," *Bijdragen en Meedeleningen van het Historisch Genootschap* 8:1 (1885) and Nationaal Archief (NA), inv. no. 3.01.18 115 (Archief Raadpensionaris Gaspar Fagel), 1672, "Jornaal van Jan van Schriek over de ongelegentheden te Rotterdam 1672".

hands of governments.³¹ One pamphleteer summarised petitioning simply as "the undertakings of citizens".³²

This is not to say that the novel use of printed petitions was widely supported. On the contrary, petitioning led to what David Zaret has dubbed the "paradox of innovation".³³ The innovative aspects of petitioning, claimed Zaret, were not defended openly. Instead commentators ignored the implications of their own conduct, stressed the importance of old habits, and presented their own behaviour, even if it was innovative, as part of tradition. Others would describe these 'newisms' as completely unwanted behaviour. Lucas Watering, a member of the city militia in Amsterdam, for example, claimed that it was not appropriate for citizens to tell regents what to do because then "regents were no longer regents".³⁴ Similarly, the Amsterdam regent Hans Bontemantel opposed petitions because "presenting petitions can only lead to revolt in the city, where one should contrarily search for calm and concord".³⁵ The Rotterdammer Johannes Naeranus looked back on the events of the summer of 1672 and wrote: "We must admit that our nation has become notorious for thinking that talking freely and unbound against magistrates is a mark of our freedom". As a consequence of this wrong idea of what freedom entailed, "pasquils and libellous blue books flew through the entire country".³⁶

Petitions and their functions

What then, were these petitions about? Mostly, petitions dealt with typical urban problems such as managing public spaces, infrastructure, economic life, social problems such as family abuse and divorce cases.³⁷ At times of political crises, however, the demands in petitions

³¹ J.A. Schimmel, *Burgerrecht te Nijmegen 1592–1810. Geschiedenis van de verlening en burgerlijst* (Tilburg, 1966), 76.

³² *Hydra of Monster-Dier* Knuttel 10601, 20.

³³ Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture*, 254–260.

³⁴ Gebhard, "Een Dagboek uit het Rampjaar": 55.

³⁵ G.W. Kernkamp, *De Regeering van Amsterdam. Soo in 't civiel als crimineel en militaire (1653–1672). Ontworpen door Hans Bontemantel*, 2 vols (The Hague, 1879) vol. 2, 229.

³⁶ J. Naeranus, *Verhael van 't Voornaemste* (1672) Knuttel 10384, 15. The reference is to Tacitus.

³⁷ Van Nierop, "Private Interests, Public Policies" in *The Public and Private*, ed. Wheelock and Seeff, 33; G. Dorren, *Eenheid en verscheidenheid. De burgers van Haarlem in de Gouden Eeuw* (Amsterdam, 2001); Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture*,

quickly became political. Most characteristically, citizens would demand that their privileges be upheld and ultimately they could even suggest a purge of government by replacing several regents.³⁸ Political petitions were normally not the product of individuals but of groups, who met (perhaps several times) to strategise and calculate their options before filing the product of their meetings.³⁹ A petition about governance by a group of people had more chance of success than a petition by an individual.⁴⁰ These groups always consisted of (registered, respectable) citizens because these were the people who were taken seriously by government.⁴¹ A lawyer was often involved in drafting the petition to reduce the chances of approaching magistrates wrongly.⁴² Besides using the right jargon, petitions were presented to government by the “most respectable citizens” who often wore their finest clothes. Petitioners identified themselves as *supplianten* to show their humbleness towards government.⁴³ When the petition concerned matters of governance, everything was done to deny that the lower parts of society had anything to do with the undertaking.⁴⁴ This is significant as it shows the widespread and deeply anchored inequality of early modern politics. A petition signed by a handful of respectable citizens would be the more influential, whether presented to Dutch authorities or to the anonymous reading public, than one signed by hundreds of non-citizens.⁴⁵ Regents also had a normal procedure

216; Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation*, 109–149; P. Knevel, *Het Haags Bureau. 17e-eeuwse ambtenaren tussen staatsbelang en eigenbelang* (Amsterdam, 2001), 88.

³⁸ M. van der Bijl, *Idee en interest. Voorgeschiedenis, verloop en achtergronden van de politieke twisten in Zeeland en vooral in Middelburg tussen 1702 en 1715* (Groningen, 1981), 154.

³⁹ A character in a dialogue claimed that “citizens should play the role of suppliant and ask, as we have done”. *Tweede Dam-Praetje* (1672) Knuttel 10568.

⁴⁰ Dorren, *Eenheid*, 89; P. Knevel, *Burgers in het geweer. De schutterijen in Holland, 1550–1700* (Hilversum, 1994), 338.

⁴¹ According to one pamphleteer, petitioning was the business of citizens. *Hydra ofte Monster-Dier* (1672) Knuttel 10601. According to Van der Bijl petitions were the products of the civic middle class. Van der Bijl, *Idee*, 156.

⁴² Knevel, *Burgers*, 347–348. Constantijn Huygens sr. advised several correspondents to make use of a lawyer when filing a petition. *De Briefwisseling van Constantijn Huygens (1608–1687) uitgegeven door J.A. Worp*, 6 vols (The Hague, 1917) vol. 6, 306.

⁴³ A. Fockema, *De Nederlandse Staat onder de Republiek* (Amsterdam, 1969), 101. Cf. *Request voor Simon Claessen Cum Sociis* (1983) Knuttel 10983.

⁴⁴ A. Wood, *Riot, Rebellion and Popular Politics in Early Modern England* (New York, 2002), 119.

⁴⁵ This has led Knights to argue for representation, instead of direct participation as the nexus of early modern politics. Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation*, 110.

concerning petitions. The request was firstly filed, after which the demands were investigated for validity and reasonableness. Thirdly, the request was tested in relation to the common good, after which, lastly, a verdict was formulated.⁴⁶

For politicians, petitions could, moreover, serve as a useful tool for everyday politics. First of all, despite the many complaints in correspondence about the tedious work of dealing with petitioners, we can be sure that regents preferred reading a piece of paper to being pelted with stones, which meant that magistrates responded to grievances to keep the people they governed obedient.⁴⁷ Secondly, governments used petitions to construct laws. Legal bodies would at times even wait for a petition before drafting a new legal text.⁴⁸ The connection between petitions and lawmaking was openly recognised by contemporaries. According to the individual who collected petitions for the city council in Rotterdam in 1672, many petitions were missing from this archive because they had been used to formulate local statutes.⁴⁹ Thirdly, as David Zaret has shown, a consequence of the widespread use of printed petitions was that earlier, unmet demands and grievances from former petitions were referred to, which supported the development of the idea that politics was made up of a constant dialogue.⁵⁰ This use is reflected in pamphlets as well. Besides referring to unmet demands in their own locality, pamphleteers soon began pointing out what had been demanded in other cities and provinces. Pamphleteer Johan Gribbuis, for example, summed up the petitions that had been filed in 1672 in the cities of Delft, Gouda, Tholen, Zierikzee, Middelburg, Vlissingen, Veere, Goes, Leiden, Haarlem and Amsterdam (in reality there were even more cities where petitions had been filed

⁴⁶ Fockema, *De Nederlandse Staat*, 102. There were, however, also examples that would argue otherwise. Some regents liked to let the petitioners wait endlessly and then send them away empty handed. Knevel, *Het Haagse bureau*, 135.

⁴⁷ Knevel, *Het Haagse bureau*, 116; Van Nierop, "Private Interests, Public Policies," in *The Public and Private*, ed. Wheelock and Seeff, 33.

⁴⁸ A. Van Loo, *Poincten van Redres en Reformatie*, (1672) Knuttel 10587. A petition by a group of butter carriers in Haarlem was made literally into the new statute for their trade that was issued on 22 June 1700. Dorren, "De eerzamen. Zeventiende-eeuws burgerschap in Haarlem," in *De stijl van de burger. Over nederlandse burgerlijke cultuur vanaf de middeleeuwen*, ed. R. Aerts and H. te Velde (Kampen, 1998). Cf. Van Nierop, "Private Interests, Public Policies" in *The Public and Private*, ed. Wheelock and Seeff, 36; M. Prak, "Corporate Politics in the Low Countries. Guilds as Institutions, 14th to 18th centuries," in *Craft Guilds in the Early Modern Low Countries. Work Power and Representation*, ed. M. Prak, C. Lis, J. Lucassen and H. Solý (Aldershot, 2006), 104.

⁴⁹ GAR, 1.01, 677.

⁵⁰ Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture*, 52, 216.

and printed). In doing so, Gribbius, and many other pamphleteers, popularised the idea that citizenship involved a political agency that went beyond the locality. As a result many of the petitioners knew what people in other cities were up to, and what had been demanded, which not only supported the development of the idea of a 'public opinion' in the Dutch Republic, but which also supported the development of the citizenry as a single political group.⁵¹

Riots and petitions

When groups of regents debated the future appointment of the Prince of Orange as leader of the army and the fleet in January 1672, none of them could predict that their appeals to a citizen audience would produce a politically participating public that was blessed with the agency of judgement several months later. And why should they have? There had been many debates before, even on such inflammatory issues as the position of the Prince of Orange in Dutch politics. Never had these debates, however, led to a simultaneous civic movement in several different cities (or even multiple provinces). Never before had the citizenry described itself as a single group in opposition to those who ruled the Dutch Republic.⁵² Why did this happen in 1672? For the answer we have to be sensitive to the fact that none of what happened was planned or inevitable. Without the successful French invasion and the simultaneous war declarations by France, England, Munster and Cologne, Dutch regents would not have felt obliged to stress the fact that citizens were of invaluable worth to the Republic. Several different governments in the Republic (local and provincial) needed their citizens to pay their taxes as quickly as possible and they needed them to help with the defence of the cities and borders. For this they appealed

⁵¹ J. Gribbius, *d'Ontroerde Leeuw* (1672) Knuttel 10526, 40. As a consequence, Knights has claimed that petitioners could have two kinds of goals. Firstly, "the direct goal of filing demands and requests with government". Secondly, "the spread of the demands and grievances with a large public". Knights, "Parliament, Print and Corruption in Later Stuart Britain," in *The Print Culture of Parliament 1600–1800*, ed. J. Peacey (Edinburgh, 2007), 60–61.

⁵² The Dutch political theorist/merchant Pieter de la Court had even claimed that this was impossible after the Prince of Orange had been excluded from politics in the 1650s. For de la Court see G.O. van de Klashorst, "De ware vrijheid, 1650–1672," in *Vrijheid. Een geschiedenis van de vijftiende tot de twintigste eeuw*, ed. E.O.G. Haitsma Mulier en W.R.E. Velema (Amsterdam, 1999).

to a citizen audience through pamphlets.⁵³ In doing so, they referred to citizenship as the foundation of Dutch government. Citizens were actually drafted and sent to the front in the eastern provinces. Consequently, Dutch citizens were given considerable ammunition in their plea for political agency. It was argued that citizens and governments were bound by a contract. As long as both parties upheld their part of the contract, governments were allowed to levy taxes and rule, while citizens were allowed to enjoy their privileges. For this to become a workable reality, however, both parties needed to fulfil their duties. Governments were obliged to protect the city, province or entire Republic and provide good governance, while citizens were forced to obey government and, as was explicitly added, to pay taxes and help in the defence of the state.⁵⁴

After the armies of France, Munster and Cologne had conquered the provinces of Gelderland, Utrecht and Overijssel and subsequently threatened to enter (and, it was believed, to conquer) Holland, Zeeland, Groningen and Friesland, Dutch citizens were convinced that their regents had not provided good governance. Citizens, however, had upheld their end of the bargain. They argued in great numbers that they had even fought at the front in aid of the fatherland!⁵⁵ This broke the contract between government and governed. Since Dutch citizens claimed to have paid their taxes and to have helped to defend the Republic, they considered themselves entitled to share in political decisions. Most importantly, they started to call for changes in government. The floodgates opened. Petitions poured out.

To explain how printed petitions changed Dutch political culture we must look in more detail at these publications. The two different waves of petitions during that year corresponded to two waves of urban riots in the provinces of Holland, Zeeland and Friesland. There was an

⁵³ See most notably J. Borstius, *Consideratien over den tegenwoordigen toestant van het vereenigde Nederland* (1672) Knuttel 10008 and *Eenvoudig Burgerpraatje* (1672) Knuttel 10014.

⁵⁴ For the clearest articulation of these ideas see *Het rechte fondament van het nieuwe herstelde oudt hollands regt, ofte de wettige vryheydt der borgeren* (1672) Knuttel 10309. For citizenship and contracts see C. Tilly, "A primer on citizenship," *Theory and Society* 26 (1997); M. Roche, "Citizenship, social theory, and social change," *Theory and Society* 16 (1987). For an early Dutch reception of these contract ideas, see M. van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt 1555–1590* (Cambridge, 1992).

⁵⁵ This was a huge exaggeration. Most citizens did not fight at all, but helped building defences. Even here, many ignored or abandoned their duties. This was, however, left unmentioned in civic propaganda.

important difference between these two waves of petitions and in this difference lies the key to understanding civic propaganda of the 1670s and 1680s.

The first wave started at the end of June. At this time, panic had spread through the Republic as a consequence of the high number of cities that had fallen into the hands of the enemy. Stories about betrayal became louder, as did the cry for the reinstatement of the Prince of Orange as stadtholder, an office that had been abolished in the majority of the provinces of the Dutch Republic after the death in 1650 of William II, who had, it had been claimed, shown tyrannical tendencies.⁵⁶ On 29 June 1672, in Dordrecht, several men forced their magistrates to appoint the Prince of Orange to the office of stadtholder. The next day, exactly the same happened in Haarlem, Schiedam, Rotterdam and Delft. The rest of the cities in Holland and Zeeland followed within a week. These riots exhibit many similarities and, as some sources suggest, there had been direct contact between rioters from different cities. Besides similarities in the way that these riots were played out, there were also great similarities in the demands that were filed in petitions during these revolts.⁵⁷ Most demands and grievances that were listed in the petitions that appeared during the first wave were based on two concerns.⁵⁸ First of all, citizens wanted to make sure that regents delivered what the people thought was good governance.⁵⁹ The idea behind these demands was that government could be held accountable on the basis of rules that had been predetermined. The demands that corresponded with this category were for example a renewed

⁵⁶ For an early articulation of these ideas see J. de Witt, *Deductie* (1654) Knuttel 7545.

⁵⁷ Years later, Jan Wagenaar claimed that these popular movements were so similar, that retelling the story of all cities would become "incredibly boring". J. Wagenaar, *Vaderlandsche Historie, vervattende de geschiedenissen der vereenigde nederlanden, inzonderheid die van Holland van de vroegste tyden af*, 20 vols (Amsterdam, 1756) vol. 14, 71.

⁵⁸ For all these demands see the eight printed petitions from Amsterdam, Middelburg, Zierikzee, Gorinchem and Rotterdam. *Copie* (1672) Knuttel 10159; *Oprechten Eysch* (1672) Petit 3960; *Request Vande Amsterdamse Borgerye* (1672) Knuttel 10213; *Artyckelen* (1672) Tiele 6081; *Aensprake* (1672) Knuttel 10256; *Versoeck Gedæen aen de E.E. Burgermeesteren ende Vroedtschappen der Stadt Rotterdam* (1672) Knuttel 10145; *Breeden-Raedt* (1672) Knuttel 10162.

⁵⁹ These demands show many similarities with Heinz Schilling's civic republicanism. H. Schilling, "Civic Republicanism in Late Medieval and Early Modern German Cities," in *Religion, Political Culture and the Emergence of Early Modern Society. Essays in German and Dutch History*, ed. H. Schilling (Leiden/New York/Cologne, 1992).

publication of all the rights and privileges of the citizenry. Citizens also demanded to see the yearly accounts of cities. They wanted to check tax expenditure and to know who had said what during crucial provincial meetings. This last demand was particularly inflammatory because several delegations from cities had recently argued during meetings of the States of Holland in favour of negotiating a peace with the French invader, which was subsequently explained as a form of treason in popular publications. Citizens now wanted to know exactly who had said what, so individual regents could be held accountable. Moreover, to prevent a recurrence of this sort of behaviour, the petitioning citizens wanted to renew arrangements, so they would be kept more closely informed about political issues in the future.

Secondly, the demands and grievances in the petitions during the first wave of revolts were concerned with the Prince of Orange. The bulk of these demands claimed that the elevation of the prince of Orange to the office of stadtholder was necessary for the future of the Dutch Republic. Petitioners argued that the stadtholderate had been a crucial office that had proven its worth in the history of the Dutch Republic, had been wrongfully abolished (by John de Witt personally, it was argued) and suppressed during the last 22 years. Obviously, given these Orangist demands, this first wave of riots can be described as an Orangist revolt.⁶⁰

The first batch of petitions was successful in at least one of its goals. The Prince of Orange was appointed to the office of stadtholder in Holland and Zeeland in the first days of July. Investigations into the meetings of several political bodies were promised. Riots, however, did not stop after these momentous events. On the contrary, they intensified to such an extent that on 20 August, John and Cornelis de Witt, who were by now being held personally responsible for the war and the deterioration of good governance, were killed in The Hague by dozens of citizens. In the wake of the murder a second wave of petitions was published, this time on a larger scale and making slightly different demands. These petitions were published in two cities in the province of Friesland (Leeuwarden and Sneek), six cities in the province of Zeeland (Middelburg, Veere, Zierikzee, Tholen, Vlissingen and Goes) and seven cities in the province of Holland (Amsterdam, Rotterdam,

⁶⁰ Renier, *De Noord-nederlandse natie*, 231; P. Geyl, "Democratische tendenties in 1672".

The Hague, Haarlem, Delft, Leiden, Dordrecht). In total 170 political changes were demanded in these cities.⁶¹

Most of the demands of pamphleteers and citizens were concerned with ensuring good governance after the collapse of the government of the 'True Freedom'. Since it was clear at the time that many offices would become vacant within days, we could say that these demands were concerned with getting the right people in the right places. For some illustration: Citizens in several cities demanded to choose new administrators for their own city militia and they wanted a voice in the decision on filling the freshly available places in local city councils with capable regents.⁶² Citizens massively composed lists of candidates for office. Since the Dutch Republic lacked royalty or hereditary succession, an office was, in the language of contemporaries, to be filled by the most "capable and respectable" ("*bequaeme en aansienlijcke*") men.⁶³ To determine capability for office, petitioners explored several characteristics of the archetypical good regent.⁶⁴ Since their goal was a government that had built-in safeguards to remove (and prevent) oligarchy, trust was one of the contested issues. When could the members of a society put their lives in the hands of their regents? The first solution of the petitioners was obvious. All new regents had to be citizens of the community that they governed.⁶⁵ Other requirements for office-holding included a correct religious persuasion (at this time "True Reformed Religion"), a certain amount of personal wealth, an apt political network and, of course, the correct political ideology.⁶⁶

⁶¹ For a full description of these demands and all petitions see Reinders, *Gedrukte chaos*.

⁶² See for example *Het aengeplackt Biljet* (1672) Tiele 6125.

⁶³ The stadtholderate was actually the exception that proved the rule. On the desire to make the office of stadholder hereditary for the male members of the House of Orange see Stern, *Orangism in the Dutch Republic*. For a treatment of capability as the basis of Dutch politics see *Public Offices, Private Demands. Capability in Governance in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch Republic*, ed. J. Hartman, J. Nieuwstraten and M. Reinders (Newcastle, 2009).

⁶⁴ There is a difference between capability for office (mostly a list of properties that candidates for office should have) and capability in office (the proper behaviour once acting as a regent). See *Public Offices*, ed. Hartman et al., (Newcastle, 2009).

⁶⁵ Twelve demands in nine different petitions were concerned with citizenship. All of them argued that citizens should always be preferred to non-citizens. This was as true for important political offices as it was for small offices in neighbourhoods.

⁶⁶ Eight demands in seven petitions claimed that new regents should adhere to the Reformed religion. It has been erroneously claimed in the past that Dutch government was made up of the "wealthiest men". S. B. Baxter, *William III* (London, 1966). The Dutch Republic was on the whole, however, by no means run by the wealthiest men.

There is no doubt that on some level this political ideology (Orangism) mattered a great deal to these citizens. Most of the regents who had (openly) supported the politics of the True Freedom and had opposed the Prince of Orange were now considered unfit for office. Remarkably, however, the Prince of Orange, or Orangism for that matter, was not an issue anymore for these petitioning citizens. The people who were supposed to have acted during this period from an innate love for the Prince hardly mentioned him or his interests in their demands. Where in June and July more than ninety percent of all petitions had contained arguments claiming that the Prince of Orange had to be promoted to the office of stadtholder, only five of the 170 demands in August, September and October included any reference to the Prince of Orange or the office of stadtholder. To illustrate the importance and scope of this lack of Orangist issues: There appeared at this exact time an Orangist propaganda campaign in pamphlets to appoint the Prince of Orange to the sovereign office of count in the province of Holland. Citizens who published petitions, however, distanced themselves from this plan. On the contrary, several pamphlets appeared that criticised the Orangist plans of a sovereign count and supported the capability issues in the second wave of printed petitions.⁶⁷ After August 1672, in other words, civic propaganda had parted ways with Orangism. Due to this change, published petitions retained their importance after the Year of Disaster, when they became a possible tool of opposition against the Orangist regents who had been appointed with their help in 1672.

Civic propaganda in the 1670s and 1680s

When the French army left Utrecht in 1673, the Count of Hoorn, who had been sent to Utrecht to represent the Prince of Orange, promised that local government would be purged. A mechanism similar to those in place in Holland, Zeeland and Friesland was put in motion in Utrecht. Citizens filed a petition with Hoorn, demanding several changes and making their preferences for the new officeholders

In fact, many of the wealthiest individuals have never been involved in government, but some wealth (or a lack of debts) was seen as necessary.

⁶⁷ For a treatment of this previously unknown Orangist campaign and its failure, see M. Reinders, "Burghers, Orangists and 'good government'. Popular political opposition during the Year of Disaster 1672 in Dutch pamphlets," *Seventeenth Century* 23:2 (2008).

known. A lawyer, Anton Vermeer, made sure that the Count was approached appropriately in the petition. The citizens demanded three things: Safeguards against financial corruption, the appointment of the Prince of Orange as stadtholder of Utrecht and a return of the reformed church in Utrecht. The petition was largely a repetition of the 1672 petitions in Holland, Zeeland and Friesland. Most importantly, this petition from Utrecht was also printed.⁶⁸ Consequently, as had been the case in Holland, Zeeland and Friesland, the petition provoked debate. Pamphleteers commented on the petition and on each other, creating a string of opinions. The petition and the choice of new magistrates actually became subject of a large political debate, instead of the 'Orangist coup' as this event has been described by historians. By 1680, the petition from Utrecht was referred to as "the famous petition" and it was considered particularly novel that these citizens had acted collectively, instead of individually.⁶⁹

This example from Utrecht is meant to show that political culture had changed after 1672, which can moreover be illustrated by the pamphlet *Earnest Request*, whose author commented on the purges in the province of Utrecht in 1674. He simply assessed that: "changing governments and choosing new magistrates went differently than before".⁷⁰ One year later, the Prince of Orange tried to obtain the sovereign titles of Duke of Gelderland and Count of Zutphen.⁷¹ This plan received such a negative reaction in popular publications, from politicians and citizens alike, that it was cancelled. Moreover, the Prince admitted overplaying his hand when he published a pamphlet declaring that his plan was never meant to "usurp" sovereignty over the other Dutch provinces.⁷² After 1675, citizens increasingly came to oppose the Stadtholder. Instead of an Orangist revolution, the second wave of

⁶⁸ Everard Booth, a regent from Utrecht who kept a diary during these days claimed that the petition had been signed by "officers [of the city militia] and other respectable citizens". J.A. Grothe, "Dagelijksche Aantekeningen gedurende het verblijf der Franschen te Utrecht in 1672 en 1673, gehouden door Mr. Everard Booth," *Berigten van het Historisch Genootschap, gevestigd te Utrecht* (1857): 150.

⁶⁹ *Historisch Verhael* (1680) Knuttel 11739. This pamphleteer claimed that these citizens had been "motivated" by people from other provinces.

⁷⁰ The pamphleteer was in fact criticising this "new method". *Ernstig Verzoek* (1674) Knuttel 11318.

⁷¹ H.H. Rowen, *The Princes of Orange. The Stadholders in the Dutch Republic* (Cambridge, 1988), 138–140; Franken, *Coenraad van Beuningen*, 136–144; Troost, *William III*, 116; Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 796–806.

⁷² *De Staten van Holland* (1675) Knuttel 11338.

petitions in 1672 turned out to have been a prelude to a new political culture in the 1670s and 1680s, wherein citizens were not afraid to criticise the man and the movement that they had supported when they had fought the oligarchic tendencies of the adherents of the True Freedom in 1672. After 1672, they were not hesitant to combat the dangers of the tyrannical tendencies that were posed by Orange. Essentially, these citizens were still searching for an optimal political structure for the Dutch Republic. They were seeking good governance. As one character in a dialogue published in 1684, when the Prince of Orange stood in fierce opposition to Amsterdam, summed up his own times: "I want to remain a supporter of the Prince, but only as much as our freedom can stand it".⁷³

In fact, if there is anything that characterises the relationship between Dutch citizens and the Prince of Orange in the late seventeenth century, it was contestation over rights and privileges. These debates were steeped in references to the Year of Disaster and accompanied by many printed petitions and pamphlets that defended the citizens' case. In 1677, for example, the citizens from the city of Deventer published a petition that discussed Orangist plans to change the "ancient" mechanism to elect new magistrates. William had tried to abolish the custom that the 'sworn citizenry' was to be consulted about this issue. The citizenry (in fact the petition was signed by 22 representatives) from Deventer declared that electing their own magistrates was the foundation of their freedom, which they were not about to (and did not) give up.⁷⁴

Another example is provided by a situation in the city of Enkhuizen in 1678. A resolution by the Prince of Orange was published on 28 February of that year, explaining how several citizens and members of the city militia had complained that their privileges and rights had been violated. More precisely, these citizens had complained about the fact that several demands and grievances that had been addressed in

⁷³ *Kaegh Discours* (1684) Knuttel 12188.

⁷⁴ *Deductie voor de gesworene gemeente der stadt Deventer, aen de heere prince van Orange, &c. Overgegeven* (1677) Knuttel 11513. Significantly, this event became the subject of a debate on the true meaning of freedom and sovereignty. See *Consideratien ende redenen, daer by de nootsaeckelijckheyt van de stadthouderlijke regeringe in desen Staet ende Republique wordt aangewesen, &c. dienende mede tot beantwoordinge, ofte refutatie van de Deductie by de gemeens-luyden van Deventer aen syn hoogheyt overgelevert, en met den Druck gemeen gemaect* (1677) Knuttel 11514; *Aenmerkingen op de consideratien, en redenen, met dewelcke het recht der steden Deventer, Campen, Swol geimpugneert wort* (1677) Knuttel 11515.

the citizens' movement of 1672 had been bypassed in recent years. First of all, several magistrates in Enkhuizen had not "published" the resolution from 26 August 1672, wherein it was decided that at that moment the Prince of Orange, or, if necessary citizens, could set a purge in motion if it was considered necessary for the welfare of the city, the province or the Republic. Furthermore, in Enkhuizen a man called Jacob Conpostel had been made member of the city council despite the fact that he was younger than 30 years of age. He was subsequently not considered capable for office by these citizens. This man had, moreover, become mayor in 1677 while his uncle Jan van Gent was mayor as well. Again, this was a reason for being dubbed incapable for office. Lastly, a man called Hendrik Schaek had been admitted to the city council, although he was not even born in the province of Holland. In short: The civic complaints were steeped in references to the demands and petitions from 1672. Instead of "casting aside the citizens and ignoring the demands," as historians would have William react to these publications, the Prince of Orange told the magistrates in Enkhuizen to come up with an acceptable solution as soon as possible, showing once again that petitions and civic propaganda were most certainly not without result. They became an essential part of political practice.⁷⁵

For the last example, we turn to Amsterdam in 1684, when the Prince of Orange and Amsterdam had been caught up in a heated debate about the mustering of 16,000 soldiers to support Spain against France. The Prince of Orange and Grand Pensionary Gaspar Fagel had tried to force Amsterdam to agree with the plans in different ways: Through "political scheming" behind the curtain, but equally importantly, through appealing to the public through the application of popular political publications. Amsterdam, however, refused to cave in, an act of resistance which was made possible because the public was not persuaded by the public image of the Orangist plans. During this debate, a petition was published by 350 citizens who claimed to represent seventeen of the eighteen voting cities in the States of Holland. These men (assuming momentarily that the publication was actually drafted by 350 individuals) presented three grievances to the Prince of Orange. Firstly, they wanted the administration of the city militia in all cities to remain without interference from local regents. Secondly,

⁷⁵ *Twee Missiven Van sijn Hoogheyt den Heeren prince van Oranje, d'Eene aen de Majestaet van Zierk-Zee d'Ander aen de Majestaet van Enkhuysen* (1678) Knuttel 11624.

they asked that every banner of the city militia have its own colonel, who was to be drafted from the experienced captains of the banners themselves, instead of putting an outsider at the head of a banner. Thirdly, they wanted to control the expenditure of the taxes that they had paid over the last twelve years.⁷⁶ This printed petition provides us with an excellent opportunity to understand the development of political culture as a consequence of changes in the use of political publications and civic propaganda during the late seventeenth century Dutch Republic. It is perhaps unlikely that the petition was in fact the product of a collaboration between 350 citizens from 17 different cities. Probably, this claim is an example of a rhetorical trick from a pamphleteer. The petition, which opposed Amsterdam (the only one of the 18 cities with a vote in the States of Holland that was supposedly not a part of this publication) maintained that the citizens from the 17 cities had supported the Dutch Republic financially, whereas Amsterdam had argued that they had not. These '350 citizens' reacted with indignation. They pointed out that a simple look at the tax records would suffice to prove them right. It is of significance that the publication was presented as representing all the citizens from these cities.⁷⁷ Apparently, by 1684 a printed petition from the citizens (not as a local group of privileged individuals, but as one group) that was aimed at an anonymous public was seen as a powerful tool of persuasion. Moreover, several other petitions and dialogues appeared that claimed to represent the same group.⁷⁸ According to a fictitious dialogue between a man from The Hague and a man from Amsterdam that was published in its defence, the petition was "not politely phrased, but understandable and a contribution to the common good".⁷⁹ The man from Amsterdam explicitly referred to "the citizens of the seventeen cities" as one group. This reference to the citizens from Holland (or at times, from

⁷⁶ *Copie van een Request, Gepresenteert aen Sijn Hoogheyt, Door 350 Edele Burgeren van de 17 Steden van Hollandt* (1684) Knuttel 12183. For the debate in 1683–1684, see Kurtz, *Willem III en Amsterdam*, who presented an Orangist view. Franken tried to correct this "overly Orangist" image. Franken, *Coenraad van Beuninghen*.

⁷⁷ Kurtz seems to have thought that the petition had actually been drafted by 350 citizens. Kurtz, *Willem III en Amsterdam*, 114.

⁷⁸ *Versoek aen den Staet, En aen sijn Hoogheyt den Heere prince Van Oranjen, Onsen Stad-houder* (1684) Knuttel 12184; *Concept door de gemeene edelen, burgers en boeren, Staent op 't Pampier gebracht, en geresolveert in Zeelandt, den 1 May 1684* (1684) Knuttel 12185.

⁷⁹ *Schuyt Discours* (1684) Knuttel 12186.

the entire Dutch Republic) as a single group with shared interests and political agency is of great importance.

Conclusion

By inviting 'the public' as a determining force in 1672, Dutch polemicists changed Dutch political culture. Mostly, they gave rhetorical ammunition to a group of citizens who published their own complaints, grievances and thoughts on politics. The first result of this shift in political culture was the murder of John and Cornelis de Witt and the massive purges in the different governmental bodies (local, provincial, 'national') of Dutch Republic in 1672. What, however, happened after these momentous events? The Prince of Orange, who was one of those who had benefited greatly from the events of 1672, did not usurp all political power. He could not simply cast aside 'the people' who had rallied in his support with their riots and petitions. After 1672, citizens were not afraid to oppose governments, not even the Prince of Orange himself. Moreover, William and his close circle of trustees, most notably Grand Pensionary Gaspar Fagel, changed their focus of political attention as well. Where the years 1650–1672 (the period of the True Freedom) had been characterised by regents who were reluctant to invite citizens into politics, the last part of the seventeenth century saw the constant re-emerging of the public as a political actor, at times at the instigation of Orangist publicists. As it turns out, the civic movement that emerged from this period was a significant prelude to the riotous eighteenth century. The custom of political petitioning, in many ways the core of European political culture in the eighteenth century, can already be observed during the late seventeenth century. Like relatively modern notions of citizenship, these concepts became part of the 'political custom' during the 1670s and 1680s.

Part II

The Pamphlet as an Historical Actor

POISON IN PRINT: PAMPHLETEERING AND THE DEATHS OF CONCINI (1617) AND THE BROTHERS DE WITT (1672)

Jill Stern

Introduction

In the late summer of 1672, following the lynching of the brothers John and Cornelis de Witt in The Hague, a pamphlet appeared that attempted to place those events within a wider context. The first part of this work was a *praatje* or conversation between fictional English, French and Dutchmen on the current course of relations between their countries; the second half, however, cast its net in a different direction and was a comparison between the lives and deaths of Concino Concini, Marquis d'Ancre, the favourite of Marie de Medici, who was murdered in Paris in 1617, and the brothers De Witt in Holland. This latter theme clearly struck a chord, for the second half of the pamphlet was reissued in the same year, this time in German.¹ There are striking similarities between the manners in which the deaths of Concini and the brothers Cornelis and John de Witt were treated in contemporary political rhetoric, and it was intriguing to discover that a seventeenth-century contemporary of De Witt had seen fit to draw attention to this parallel. In this article I attempt to explore elements of the political tracts issued before and after the deaths of Concini and the brothers De Witt based on the corpus of political pamphlets contained in the Bibliothèque Nationale and the Dutch Koninklijke Bibliotheek.

My findings support the proposition that the ritual of so-called 'tyrannicide' was an integral part of the culture of early modern Europe. In the course of this ritual, writers of popular political polemic formulated accusations of treason and 'foreignness', but the main burden of their theme was that the overmighty subject had deprived the rightful ruler of his authority. Such accusations were levied not only in

¹ *Den bedrogen Engelsman met de handen in 't hair (...) een vergelijckinge tusschen den Marquis d'Ancre en Cornelis en Ian de Witt* (1672) Knuttel 10480; *Bergleichung Lebens und Todes des Marquisen d'Ancre zu Paris 1617 mit dem Leben und Tode des Johannes und Cornelis de Wit im Hage* (1672) Knuttel 10481.

monarchical France but also in the Dutch Republic where sections of the populace and political classes desired the return of a stadtholder prince of Orange. In these periods of crisis, the anticipation and symbolic rehearsal of the deaths of the intended victims form characteristic features of pamphlets. The mutilation of the murdered bodies enabled the populace to take part in a symbolic cleansing of the past which anticipated the restoration of authority to those to whom it rightly belonged. This article describes and analyses these events in seventeenth-century France and the Dutch Republic.

A comparison

The story of the brothers De Witt is well known. Following the death of William II in November 1650, there was no stadtholder for 22 years in the majority of the Dutch provinces. Supporters of William II's posthumous son, William III, sought to re-establish the stadtholderate and ensure the Prince's promotion to the offices of his forefathers. As pensionary of the leading province of Holland, John de Witt promoted a 'true Republic' in which there was no need for a stadtholder or eminent head, an institution which in his view smacked of monarchy. However, the French invasion of 1672 marked the end of the ascendancy of the De Witts. The speedy French assault and the failure of the garrisons in the east of the Republic to put up more than a token resistance, created an air of panic in which the De Witts and their supporters were accused of treachery. It was alleged that they were conspiring with the French to give up Dutch sovereignty in return for the permanent exclusion of the Prince of Orange from the stadtholderate; "rather the French, than the Prince", was said to be their motto. William III was declared captain-general of the Republic's forces, and in July 1672 popular agitation in the Holland towns led to him being declared stadtholder.

In June 1672 there had been an ineffective attempt on the life of John de Witt and in the following month a mob broke into the town hall at Dordrecht and destroyed the painting which commemorated Cornelis de Witt's role in the naval victory in the Thames in 1667. The canvas was torn from the frame and the figure of Cornelis cut out and mutilated. On 4 August 1672 John de Witt resigned his offices. His brother Cornelis, accused of plotting against the life of William III, was imprisoned in The Hague where on the 20th of August both brothers were murdered by an angry crowd. Their corpses were dragged to the scaffold where their noses, ears, toes, fingers and genitals were cut off

and their entrails torn from their bodies. Some observers stuck parts of their bodies on quills and ran through the streets selling them. Sections of the cadavers were roasted and eaten by members of the crowd. The following night the remains of the two brothers were interred in the Nieuwe Kerk in The Hague. When word of the burial got out, there was talk of digging up the bodies and burning them and casting the ashes to the wind but the mob was satisfied by tearing down the arms of the family De Witt which, as was usual after a burial, were hanging outside the church.²

Concino Concini was an Italian in France. His wife Leonora Galigai was the daughter of the wet nurse of Marie de Medici, the wife of King Henry IV of France. The affection between the two women was strong. Leonora and her husband had accompanied Marie to France and Concini had been made first equerry to Henry IV, allegedly to help Marie forgive her husband's infidelities. With the death of Henry IV in May 1610, Marie de Medici became regent and she dismissed ministers such as Sully whom she had inherited from her husband, preferring to rely on Concini, who in spite of a notable lack of military experience was made a marshal. The nobility of the blood found themselves excluded from court and the key positions in the royal household, army and church which they considered to be theirs by right. They withdrew to their estates and garrisoned their fortresses, leaving France in a state of civil strife. The Prince de Condé, who was second in line to the throne, and his fellow nobility allied with the States General in demanding programmes of 'reform' which were as much designed to damage courtiers such as Concini, now appointed Marquis d'Ancre, as to right the nation's ills. In September 1614 Louis XIII officially reached the age of full authority but he was not yet ready for independent action. However, in 1616 under pressure from his mother and Concini, Louis had Condé arrested, leaving his supporters in an uproar and demanding the resignation of d'Ancre who was held to be the evil genius behind the Prince's imprisonment.

Louis XIII was, however, clearly becoming jealous at the sight of courtiers fawning on Concini whom they saw as the source of all promotion and aggrandisement. The King's favourite, Charles d' Albert, Sieur de Luynes, deeply distrustful of the Queen Mother and her adviser,

² H. H. Rowen, *John de Witt. Grand Pensionary of Holland 1625–1672* (Princeton, 1978), 861, 873, 880–883; M. Reinders, "Printed Pandemonium. The Power of the Public and the Market for Popular Political Publications in the Early Modern Dutch Republic" (PhD diss., Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2008), 268–273.

urged him to take action against the upstart. Rumours circulated that Concini was going to force Louis to abdicate and would dispatch him to a monastery. Scurrilous pamphlets were now circulated about the Marquis d'Ancre, his relations with the Queen Mother and his alleged connections with foreign powers. Much was made of the stone structure known as *le pont d'amour* which provided a private link between the royal palace and Concini's lodgings. Scurrilous pamphlets alleged that Concini had been seen rearranging his garments following an assignation with Marie de Medici. An inflamed mob broke into his second residence in the Faubourg St Germain and portraits of Concini and his wife were torn apart.³ An image of Marie de Medici was hurled contemptuously from the window: Only a likeness of the King remained untouched. In response Concini had a gallows erected in Paris, drew up a list of those to be purged and planted spies in the streets of Paris.

In October 1616, the royal army firmly in his control, Concini started legal proceedings designed to make himself a Duke and a Peer. Rumours began to circulate that the King himself wished to be rid of this overmighty servant. Supporters of Condé planned to have Concini arrested and brought before the Parlement of Paris on a charge of abuse of privilege. On 24 April 1617 Louis d'Hôpital de Vitry, a captain of the guard, arrested Concini in the name of the King and with the King's approval. Concini attempted to resist and was shot and stabbed. One of his colonels told Louis XIII: "sire, at this hour you are king for Marshal Ancre is dead". The hastily summoned Parlement of Paris described the act as a clear expression of the King's justice and declared magnanimously that no posthumous legal proceedings should be carried out against Concini, who was clearly guilty as charged. The body of Concini was buried late that night in the church of Saint Germain de l'Auxerrois but it was not to remain there. Next morning a mob of women and men removed the body from its grave and strung it up on the gallows which Concini had had installed on the Pont Neuf. His body was atrociously mutilated and dismembered, parts of the corpse were fed to the dogs, his heart was cooked and eaten with vinegar, the limbs were burnt with his gallows and the ashes cast to the wind.⁴

³ *Arrest de la Cour de Parlement de Paris, et Sentence de Monsieur le Lieutenant Civil (Pour la poursuite du pillage arrive a Paris en la maison du Marechal d' Ancre (1616), 3.*

⁴ P. Chevalier, *Louis XIII* (Fayard, 1979), 133, 141; A. Lloyd Moote, *Louis XIII, The Just* (Berkeley, 1989), 49–50, 75, 90, 92, 94; O. Ranum, "The French Ritual of Tyrannicide in the late Sixteenth Century," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 11:1 (1980): 78–79.

The writer of the pamphlet of 1672 sub-titled *A Comparison between the Life and Death of the Marquis d'Ancre in France and those of Cornelis and John de Witt in Holland*⁵ was drawing on an episode, that is the death of Concini, which had received considerable coverage in the United Provinces. The French government, headed by the Queen Mother Marie de Medici, had attempted to suppress political tracts attacking her favourite and it is no surprise that, just as during the later Frondes, subversive French material was published in the Netherlands. Most noteworthy was the document entitled *Declaration and protestation of the Princes (...) against the Conspiracy and tyranny of the Marquis d'Ancre*, which set out the list of accusations against Concini and was published in The Hague in 1617 in both French and Dutch.⁶ Several pamphlets of the time published in Dutch reported the events surrounding the death of Concini in some gruesome detail and in one case provided a print of the murder and its hideous aftermath.⁷ It was reported in one pamphlet that the death of Concini resulted in demonstrations of joy in the Court at The Hague and that Dutch citizens openly danced in delight in the streets of the town.⁸ Concini had long been associated with a pro-Habsburg policy which had been opposed by the French nobility of the blood and their adherents and in the face of their resistance had arranged the marriage of the young Louis XIII to Anne of Austria. An anonymous Dutch writer alleged that the Marquis d'Ancre had been actively involved in a plot with Spain and the Jesuits which would not only have caused civil strife in France but would also have had the Dutch Republic as its target. He added sagely that there were lessons to be drawn in the Republic from these events; a reference perhaps to the current Truce with Spain (1609–1621) which opponents of the Grand Pensionary Oldenbarnevelt believed simply enabled the Spanish to wage war by plot and

⁵ *Den bedrogen Engelsman*, Knuttel 10480.

⁶ *Declaration et Protestation des Princes, Ducs, Pairs, Officiers de la Couronne, Gouverneurs de Provinces, Seigneurs, Chevaliers, Gentil-hommes, Villes et Communautés, associés et confédérés pour le restablissement de l'autorité du Roy et la conservation du Royaume (...) Contre la Conniuration et tyrannie du Mareschal d'Ancre* (1617) Knuttel 2326a, 2327.

⁷ For the print see *Waarachtigh verhael van t'ghene in de Louvre tsedert den 24 April tot het vertreck van de Coninginne Moeder des Conincx ghepassert is* (1617) Knuttel 2335. An account of the murder can be found in *Cort ende waerachtich verhael van't gheene den 24 Aprilis 1617 (...) den Marquis d'Ancre tot Parijs in 't hof vanden Coninc is weder-varen* (1617) Knuttel 2328.

⁸ *Cort ende waerachtich verhael*, Knuttel 2328.

subterfuge rather than by strength of arms. This was the so-called policy of the fox rather than that of the lion.⁹

Hence the writer of the pamphlet of 1672 could assume some degree of knowledge about Concini among his readers and he provided little biographical detail. His purpose was to present the brothers De Witt, especially John, as overmighty subjects whose fall and death mirrored that of Concini. He highlighted alleged similarities in their rise to power. Concini had been the favourite of the Queen Mother Marie de Medici; he owed his promotion entirely to her influence and she in turn took no decisions without his advice. The rise of the De Witts was likewise ascribed to their gaining the favour of the Holland Maid (*Hollandsche Maeght*), an archetypal figure, who represented those regents and towns of Holland who were to support De Witt and enable the brothers to become so powerful that nothing could be done without their consent. Both Concini and the De Witts, it was alleged, concentrated all patronage within their hands and acquired substantial financial resources which they banked abroad. Both parties were characterised by arrogance (*hoovaerdigheyt*), deceit and greed, having enriched themselves at the cost of the state. Their ambitions were boundless. Concini was to be “pope” of all France while John and Cornelis De Witt were known as the “prince on land” and the “prince at sea”. John De Witt, it was alleged, had made himself effectively stadtholder of Holland in place of the Prince of Orange. The writer also stressed the manner by which Concini and the De Witts attempted to deflect the political classes from their natural affections. The nobility of France were punished for minor demeanours because of their support for the Prince de Condé, while the De Witts proceeded against all those who supported the cause of William III, Prince of Orange. Moreover, Concini was accused of plotting to murder Condé, while Cornelis De Witt faced accusations of seeking to assassinate William III.¹⁰

Clearly the writer’s analysis obscured considerable differences between the power structure in the Dutch Republic and that of France and some of the comparisons were forced. The de Witts could not be described as ‘foreigners’ though they were accused, as was Concini, of encouraging unsavoury characters from abroad, and many writers of political polemic would argue that they had collaborated with the

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ *Den bedrogen Engelsman*, Knuttel 10480, 10–12.

French enemy to thwart the advancement of the Prince of Orange. However, when it came to the matter of their deaths, the author was on firmer ground. Concini's mansion in Paris was plundered and his lavish furniture was taken away while Cornelis de Witt's home in Dordrecht received similar treatment. Concini had been shot seven times in the Louvre Palace at the request of Louis XIII while the De Witts had been shot and stabbed in The Hague at the behest of the citizenry (*gemeente*). In both cases the bodies had been scandalously mutilated and displayed as a warning to others who might aim too high.¹¹ It could be argued that the author of this pamphlet had simply been struck by the similarities in the manner of the deaths of these three individuals and had moved on from there to establish spurious links between their careers. Be that as it may, he did demonstrate, even if inadvertently, the existence of a form of political rhetoric surrounding the deaths of prominent but contentious individuals. An examination of the polemic preceding the deaths of our characters and the descriptions of the hideous treatment of their corpses may throw some light upon this.

For readers of French political pamphlets in the years leading up to 1617, the death of Concini would have come as no surprise. In the eyes of the nobility Concini had usurped their traditional role at the heart of the state and gathered all power and patronage to himself. In the polemic of the supporters of the Prince de Condé, Concini was a tyrant, and the only acceptable punishment for his tyranny was death. Concini's foreignness was emphasised. He was in the words of one anonymous pamphlet writer the "*maudit poison, facon d'Italie*" (cursed poison, in the manner of Italy).¹² The fictional dream was a device which pamphlet writers deployed to implicate d'Ancre in disloyalty to France. The very 'otherworldly' quality of the experience described, enabled the writer to slander his subject unmercifully without relying on verifiable material. In this case the writer set his dream of a luxurious palace in the Faubourg St Germain (the home of Concini) which was patronised by many strange visitors dressed in the alien Spanish and Italian styles. Present at the scene was a Monsieur Abraham, a Jewish doctor, who was depicted inspecting greedily all the goods brought as gifts. Later in the work it was alleged that Monsieur Abraham

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² *Le Grand Gueridon Italien et Espagnol, Venu nouvellement en France* (1616), 3.

and Leonora the wife of Concini sought the help of demons to poison the mind of Marie de Medici against those natural defenders of France, the Princes of the Blood. A letter from a Florentine gentleman (Concini was born in Florence) was referred to, which told of money being dispatched from Florence to buy a goodly part of France. A verse of the poet Petrarch warning his fellow Italians against the foreigners ravaging the country was read out with a clear implication that this time it was France which was subject to attack.¹³ The content of the dream was reflected in a pamphlet of 1617 in which the Princes of the Blood declared their allegiance to the King, while alleging piteously that “strangers and such as favour them had seized on the sacred person of the King” and on “the whole Gouvernement of the Kingdome which they do most unjustly usurp and exercise with great Tyranny and Oppression”.¹⁴

Tyranny was a word which was frequently applied to Concini’s power in France. As one speaker contended “there is too much tyranny in you”.¹⁵ As a tyrant, it was alleged, Concini had encouraged faction and discord in France and usurped the authority of the young king. He had sought to banish the Princes of the Blood from court and had attempted to weaken the powers of the Parlement of Paris. Concini had even sited his palace so close to the Louvre that it appeared to be part of the same building. As one writer put it, “you live so close to the Louvre that a stranger to Paris does not know whether he is in the residence of the King or yours”.¹⁶ All matters went through Concini and only those whom he favoured had access to the monarch. He alone was the source of France’s ills. In a remonstrance to the King dated 4 February 1617 the Princes of the Blood assured the King that

the insatiable ambition and avarice of the Marquesse of Anchre and his wife is the only cause of the evils we are sensible of; the disasters we see and of that we feare most. This is the vice which hath festered, yea spoyled the whole body of your State. It is of him only that men do complaine and of the Ministers and Executors of his violent and raging passions, and no other.¹⁷

¹³ *Le Catolicon Francois* (1616), 8–9, 21, 27, 36.

¹⁴ *The Association of the Princes of France (with the Protestations and Declarations of their Allegiance to the King* (1617), A2 v°.

¹⁵ *Le Catolicon Francois* (1616), 29.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁷ *The Association of the Princes of France* (1617), 15–16.

Concini's intention was the authors alleged, "to draw unto himselfe the entire and absolute Administration of your kingdom". The King was urged to employ the "necessary remedy".¹⁸

Writers left their readers in little doubt as to what that remedy should be. In the fictitious dream of 1616 the author described the appearance of a man who is clearly meant to be Concini, having on his back a coat of arms neither of cloth of gold, nor of velour nor indeed of any kind of silk, being instead of "*pennes*", which means winged or feathered. The reason for this extraordinary decoration becomes clear when the writer speaks of the "*pennes*" (feathers) which are a sign of the "*peines*" (sorrows) which he will soon have to suffer. It is suggested that his wealth and authority have been acquired too hastily and those traducing spirits which raised him so high might soon in the form of flaming torches lead him to a precipice from whence his fall will be more dishonourable than any of his achievements had been glorious. The writer reminded Concini of the saying of Plutarch that those whose who are evil councillors, like snakes injecting venom into the fountain of public life, merit exemplary punishment which is greater than all the harms they have done. Since it was said by the author of the pamphlet that Concini and his wife had done more harm to France in five years than several armies could have done in the same time, it was to be presumed that his punishment would be terrible indeed.¹⁹

His punishment, writers adjudged, was soon to come. Not only was he the subject of national hatred but there had been several fateful signs like prodigious comets which had seemed to announce his death from the very heights of heaven, illuminating with their light the torments which France was to inflict upon him. It was written, an author insisted, that the city of Paris and the people would rejoice at the prosperity of the just and would equally take pleasure at the sight of the deprivation and ruin of the unjust.²⁰ In 1617, before the death of Concini, the spirit of the dead Henry IV addressed his son Louis and the people of France in a pamphlet. Henry, it was said, had heard the cries of Louis and his people and urged them to dry their tears, for the execrable tyrant would soon be lodged in the dark regions of hell. To his son Louis he delivered a particular message. Inspired by the spirit

¹⁸ Ibid., 17, E2 r^o.

¹⁹ Ibid., 10, 22, 23.

²⁰ Ibid., 26, 30.

of his father Louis must act the king and order that the tyrant and traitor be dispatched to the underworld of Pluto.²¹

Pamphlet literature urged a similar fate on the brothers De Witt. Although most pamphlets do not give the month of publication, the contents make it clear that in the period leading up to and following the appointment of William III as stadtholder in July 1672 the brothers found themselves under ferocious attack from Orangist pamphleteers. A principal accusation was that the De Witts would prefer to see the Republic fall under French hegemony rather than countenance the restoration of the stadtholderate. A pamphlet of 1672, which enjoyed four editions, reflected on the fortresses taken so easily by the French and suggested that treachery, bought by French gold, was afoot in high places.²² Another pamphlet purporting to relate the motives and methods of the French from the very mouths of the enemy, described how the government of Louis XIV had distributed bribes to leading regent families, including the De Witts, who because of their jealousy of the Prince of Orange were only too willing to assist the foreign cause. It was alleged that these traitors would not hesitate to open the city gates for the invaders.²³ Following the appointment of the Prince of Orange as stadtholder, one writer alleged that John de Witt had sent tons of gold out of the country to Italy and elsewhere for safe keeping. His brother Cornelis was, it was said, equally culpable. A pamphlet issued by the States of Holland on 4 August 1672 indignantly refuted persistent claims that Cornelis de Witt had prevented the Dutch admiral de Ruyter from destroying the French fleet, preferring instead to attack the English because they were in favour of the Prince of Orange.²⁴

The brothers were also accused of seeking to change the fundamental nature of government in the Republic and attempting to enslave the people.²⁵ There were no places on the cushions for those who were not of their faction. It was said of them that they conducted themselves

²¹ *Complaintes du Sang du Grand Henry de Tres-Heureuses memoire et de tous les bons Francois exaucees* (1617), 4.

²² *Fransche Prognosticatie ofte Prophetische Vorseggengen voorseyt door Michiel Ruholts Huysman in Westphalia* (1672) Knuttel 9923.

²³ *Positie van de Gerechtigheyt en het Recht van Oorloge in Vrankrijck tegenwoordigh gebruickelijk* (1672) Knuttel 10002, 6–7.

²⁴ *Huymans-Praetje, voorgesteld tot onderrechting, hoe men sich in dese verwenden en murmerige toestandt de tijds behoorden te dragen* (1672) Knuttel 10282, 5; *Edele Groot Mogende Heeren* (1672) Knuttel 10181.

²⁵ *Bondigh en Waerachtigh Verhael van het voornaemst voorgevallen aen den Rhyn* (1672) Knuttel 10045, 40.

like royalty, “een Prins te lande, en een te water” (“a prince on the land, and one on the water”).²⁶ Ever present was the assumption that they had in some way usurped the authority, which belonged to the Prince of Orange, and had instituted an oligarchy in which the rights and privileges of the citizens were disregarded. In Orangist polemic only the Prince could defend the citizens against the rapacious De Witts and their supporters.

Poison in print

All of this slanderous writing did not answer the question as to what to do with the De Witts. One poem published in pamphlet form drew a comparison between the fates of John the Baptist and John van Oldenbarnevelt and that which was intended for John de Witt:

It is sixteen hundred and fifty years ago,
That the head of the first master St Jan was cut off,
And three hundred and fifty have elapsed,
Since the head of the second lay before his feet.
Comes the third in such a manner to die
So shall our Fatherland inherit the hallowed freedom.²⁷

The implication of the poem was clearly that John de Witt would be beheaded, that is, undergo judicial punishment. However, this did not seem to be realistically possible. Cornelis de Witt had been accused by one Tichelaer of conspiring to bring about the death of William III.²⁸ Cornelis had been imprisoned in The Hague but even under torture refused to admit to any knowledge of such a plot. Nonetheless a court judged that he should forfeit all his offices and be exiled from Holland for life. No reason was given for the sentence which certainly made it look as if Cornelis was guilty of some offence but, on the other hand, it was clear that the judges were unwilling to convict Cornelis of any crime which might merit a capital sentence. If this was true of Cornelis it was certainly equally true of his brother John who had resigned all his offices on 4 August. Meanwhile Cornelis remained in his prison cell.

²⁶ *Fernerer und Auszufuhrlicher Bericht von dem Gegenwertigen Zustand in Nederland in Julio und Augusto 1672* (1672) Knuttel 10229B.

²⁷ *De Sprekende Toonbanck aen de verkofte Hollander* (1672) Knuttel 10360.

²⁸ *Waerachtigh verhael van 't gepasseerde in, ende omtrent der saecken tusschen Willem Tichelaer, Mr Chirurgyn tot Piershil en Mr. Cornelis de Witt* (1627) Knuttel 10210.

It was during this time that the content of pamphlet literature became positively murderous. One writer fulminated against the mildness of the sentence meted out to Cornelis. His judges, he alleged, had clearly been intimidated. No such mercy had been meted out to Buat.²⁹ The figure of Buat assumes critical importance at this time. A member of the Prince of Orange's household and a close confidant of the Prince himself, Buat had been entrusted by John de Witt with the carrying of messages to the English court during the Second Anglo-Dutch war. De Witt's intention was to promote peace talks between the two countries but Buat, emboldened by his zeal for the Prince's cause, attempted to rouse the English in favour of the restoration of the stadtholderate and the removal of De Witt. His treachery was discovered and he was executed in 1667. His death had resulted in a mild flurry of pamphlet literature mostly unfavourable to Buat and by extension the Prince, but in the hectic days of August 1672 Buat became no less than a hero. In the eyes of one pamphlet writer Buat's admirable objective had been to unite the interests of the Republic and the Prince of Orange and promote peace without bending to the French.³⁰ Another writer went so far as to list Buat as a would-be saviour of the nation and ranked him alongside William I.³¹ Contemporaries remarked ominously on the fact that Cornelis was now imprisoned in the chamber which had been occupied by Buat. Buat spoke from beyond the grave and his was not the voice of peace and reconciliation. In one pamphlet Buat urged the people that those who condemned him should suffer the same penalty while another writer warned that Buat's blood calls for vengeance.³²

John de Witt was not spared. For several pamphlet writers, he was the "new Cromwell" who would have smothered William III in his cradle.³³ This accusation was not new. At times of internal crisis when political rhetoric took on a fevered tone, Orangist pamphleteers had accused their enemies, and in particular John de Witt, of poisoning the late stadtholder William II and intending to murder his son. Now that

²⁹ *Missive of pertinent verhael van 't ghene sich in 's Graven-Hage heeft toegedragen* (1672) Knuttel 10194.

³⁰ *Ferner und Auszufuhrlicher Bericht von dem Gegenwertigen Zustand in Nederland* (1672) Knuttel 10229B.

³¹ *Het Radt van Avonture ofte den onvervalschten Spiegel* (1672) Knuttel 10304.

³² *Brillen voor Alderhande Gesichten* (1672) Knuttel 10327; *Ein Sociniaensche Consultatie tusschen Jan en Arent* (1672) Knuttel 10341, 7.

³³ *Waerschouwinghe Aen alle Edelmoedige en getrouwe Inwoonderen van Nederlandt* (1672) Knuttel 10346.

his brother also stood accused of seeking to do the Prince harm it was not surprising that this allegation resurfaced. Cornelis de Witt was forfeit of all his offices and exiled from the province of Holland following a trial during which, in spite of judicial torture, he continued to protest his innocence and indeed he was never formally declared guilty of any attempt on the life of William III. However, there were those who wished to see him dead. A quartain was circulating in The Hague.

Lucifer hollered out from hell
When can I expect the De Witts down here?
The citizens hollered from the Hague
Expect them in your gut this evening.³⁴

It was also clear that there were some who intended John de Witt's death. A few days before the murders in The Hague a pamphlet was circulating which contained a skit based on a poem by Gerard Brandt. Brandt's original work was in praise of John de Witt and the concluding verses urged that an image or statue of marble would best honour him. In the amended version, the conclusion read: "his heart should be torn from his body and his head crushed". In a letter to Johannes Vollenhoven on 4 September 1672 Brandt wrote that the skit on his poem had been designed to teach the people how they should handle the bodies of the brothers.³⁵

In 1670 a painting of Cornelis de Witt in triumph following the Dutch destruction of the English fleet in the Medway was placed in the Town Hall at Dordrecht. The painting had served as a symbol of the princely pretensions of the brothers and had been the cause of an official complaint by Charles II who had cited it as an insult at the outbreak of the third Anglo-Dutch war of 1672. It is likely that he was deeply offended by the image of a Dutch flag flying over an English naval base. An angry mob had invaded the town hall, torn the picture from its frame and cut out the image of Cornelis, bearing it aloft and mutilating it. Now with Cornelis in prison and his brother out of office the mutilation of the image recurred ominously. A writer of that time mocked the pretensions of the land and water princes before recounting the destruction of the painting by the angry crowd.³⁶

³⁴ "Lucifer roept uit de hel, Wanneer De Witt daar komen zal? De Burgers roepen uit den Haag: wacht hem 't avond in uw maag." Quoted in Rowen, *John de Witt*, 874n.

³⁵ R. van Prudhomme van Reine, *Schittering en Schandaal* (Amsterdam, 2001), 296.

³⁶ *Brillen voor Alderhande Gesichten*, Knuttel 10327.

Another writer described the actions of the crowd upon the image of Cornelis in detail. He recounted that the head, arms and legs of Cornelis were severed from the body just as if the people wanted to do that to the man himself.³⁷ An anonymous pamphlet writer addressed John de Witt. "You seek to save your brother from death," he wrote, "but you will not succeed. The people will prevent you".³⁸

Thus in both France and the Dutch Republic, we see pamphlet literature creating an atmosphere in which murder becomes a solution to acute political crises. In France, the assassination was carried out in the Court with the connivance of the King, the people mutilating the corpse. In the Netherlands the *gemeente* carried out both roles. Work by Orest Ranum on the "French Ritual of Tyrannicide" casts light on this disturbing subject. Ranum examined the murders of the Cardinal and Duc de Guise on 23 and 24 December 1588 alongside that of Concini and argued that assassinations such as these were an integral part of early modern European political culture. Since 1570 the Guise had been the most powerful family in France. It was said that no military, political or episcopal nomination could succeed without their support. In 1588 Henry III was forced to grant the Duke the title of lieutenant-general of France, and in the eyes of his numerous enemies it appeared that the Duke and his brother the Cardinal had accumulated all the powers of the state in their hands. They had effectively deprived the King of his authority to such an extent that it was impossible to arrest them and bring them before a judicial process. Assassination remained the only option. It is worthy of note that in the case of the Duke of Guise, no individual alone was prepared to undertake the task and, as in the murder of Julius Caesar, all the conspirators attempted to strike simultaneously. Some sources alleged that the bodies of the Duke and the Cardinal were dumped in quicklime and the bones tossed into the Loire. Others insisted that the bodies had been dismembered and burned in one of the great fireplaces in the castle at Blois, the ashes then being disposed of in the river. There would be no bodily remains to form the focus of a cult. Ranum suggested that these murders had considerable similarities with the case of Concini and added that the deaths of the De Witts might fall into this category.³⁹

³⁷ *Ein Sociniaensche Consultatie tusschen Jan en Arent* (1672) Knuttel 10341.

³⁸ *Bysondere Speculatie op den Staet* (1672) Knuttel 10367.

³⁹ Ranum, "The French Ritual": 63–82; O. Ranum, "Guises, Henri III, Henry IV, Concini. Trente ans d'assassinats politique," *L'histoire* 51 (1982).

Ranum argued that it was the fate of the murdered bodies which permitted the populace to participate in this cleansing of the over-mighty subject. Here we must take note that pamphlet literature of the time described in depth for its readers the outrages committed on the bodies of Concini and the brothers De Witt. In the case of Concini several writers described the actions of the mob in sickening detail and placed each outrage in context. His corpse was hung up by the feet for this "horrible head of a criminal dared not look at the sky". He was dismembered piece by piece for he had wished to dismember the body of the state. His body was burnt and consumed by flames just as he had wished to consume and destroy the liberties of the French people. His ashes were scattered to the wind indicating the inevitable fate of such overweening ambition.⁴⁰ The death of the De Witts was accompanied by similar rhetoric. One writer described the cutting off of a finger of the right hand of John de Witt which he had used to grasp the pen which signed the Perpetual Edict abolishing the stadtholderate in Holland.⁴¹ An appropriately titled butcher recounted in a fictional *praatje* that parts of the bodies of the brothers De Witt were being sold, just as they had intended selling the Republic to France.⁴² The spirit of John de Witt in one pamphlet contemplates the remains of his earthly body and mourns that he who had ruled like a prince over the land was now mocked and shamed by the very lowest of the people.⁴³

Why was it necessary for French and Dutch writers to recount these details to those who had not been present? What was the purpose of such pamphlet literature? Michel Foucault has described such scenes of torture, death and mutilation of the victims as expressing the desire that justice pursue the body beyond all possible pain and has suggested that the physical strength of the sovereign power was exhibited in the mutilated corpse. He argues that in scenes of public execution, the main character was not the victim but the people as spectators whose real and immediate presence was required for the performance.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ *La Divine Vengeance sur la Mort du Marquis D'Ancre* (1617), 3–4.

⁴¹ *Sententie Van den generalen Hove van Nederland, Tegens Mr. Cornelis de Witt, Oudt Burgemeester der Stadt Dordrecht; &c. En Mr. Jan de Wit, Gewesen Raed Pensionaris van Hollandt en Westvrieslandt* (1672) Knuttel 10410.

⁴² *De Haeghse Anatomie, door Mr Borrebagh* (1672) Knuttel 10403, 4.

⁴³ *Verscheide Aenmerkingen op eenige Saken onlangs voorgevallen* (1672) Knuttel 10412.

⁴⁴ M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison* (Harmondsworth, 1979), 34, 48–49, 57.

Clearly the written word, accompanied by the visual image of the dismembered bodies, enabled those who had not been physically present to participate in the ritual. Why was this important? Is it that these deaths and mutilations were to be seen as a collective rite? In the case of Concini, it is the King, Louis XIII, whom pamphleteers praise for the death of the monster. "You have shown us that you can act like a king", commented one writer approvingly.⁴⁵ A medal issued after the death of Concini depicted Louis as Apollo slaying a dragon.⁴⁶ Others made plain that the King had acted on behalf of God⁴⁷ and that the bloody end of Concini was as much the work of Divine Providence as that of the monarch.⁴⁸ Yet the people had a role to play. In the frontispiece of a pamphlet on the death of Concini published in the Dutch Republic, the systematic mutilation of the corpse is carried out by the people while the King watches approvingly from an upper window.⁴⁹ People and monarch come together to destroy the tyrant and restore sovereignty where it belongs.

In the Republic it is the people who murder the De Witts, and their action is a judgment upon the brothers. One pamphlet had as its title: *Sentence of the citizens against John and Cornelis de Witt*.⁵⁰ Another author recounted that they had been judged not by law, the implication being that that was not possible, but by the people.⁵¹ A third agreed that the brothers had been punished by the people. Ultimate sovereignty, the author wrote, lies in the people and in exceptional circumstances it is their duty to act when there is no other authority which can humble the tyrant.⁵² In this climate, it is understandable that writers sought to enable those who read and heard their pamphlets to participate vicariously in this sentence of the people against John and Cornelis de Witt.

⁴⁵ *Actions de Graces et Resiouissance de la France sur la mort du Marquis d'Ancre au Roy* (1617), 8.

⁴⁶ Moote, *Louis XIII*, 95.

⁴⁷ *Les Desirs de France sur la mort de Conchine* (1617), 5.

⁴⁸ *La Divine Vengeance sur la Mort du Marquis D'Ancre* (1617), 6.

⁴⁹ *Waarachtigh verhael van 't ghene in de Louvre tsedert den 24 April tot het vertreck ven de Coninginne Moeder des Conincx ghepassert is* (1617) Knuttel 2335.

⁵⁰ *Sententie der Burgeren van Mr Cornelis de Wit (...) ende Mr. Jan de Wit* (1672) Knuttel 10411.

⁵¹ *Memoriae Johannis et Cornelis de Witt* (1672) Knuttel 10450.

⁵² *Verscheide Aenmerkingen op eenige Saken onlangs voorgevallen* (1672) Knuttel 10412.

The voice of ghosts

While the bodies of Concini and the De Witts could no longer speak, pamphlet writers gave voice to their souls in hell. The ghosts of John de Witt and Concini mused on their fate and acknowledged remorse from beyond the grave. The ghost as protagonist was a well-established figure in seventeenth-century political rhetoric. In a series of pamphlets published in 1660 the ghosts of Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, Oliver Cromwell and Cardinal Mazarin came together in hell in an unholy trinity to plan the downfall of the Dutch Republic. On the recommendation of Lucifer they welcomed the living John de Witt into their midst to advise them on strategy and execution.⁵³ These are no theological reflections. In Catholic thought the appearances of souls after death was acceptable but Protestants were more wary. Ludwig Lavater, a Calvinist minister published in Zurich in 1569 his *Von Gespensten* in which he admitted the possibility of angels and demons but refuted the idea that the souls of the dead could return to haunt the living.⁵⁴ These ghosts, however, have their origins in drama and rhetoric. The first extant play of western theatre, *The Persians*, by Aeschylus has the spirit of a dead king amongst its characters, and in Seneca's *Thyeste* and *Agamemnon* the drama commenced with the appearance of a ghost. By the time of the Renaissance and Baroque age phantoms regularly haunted the stages of Western Europe.⁵⁵ In these dramas the ghost was a tragic figure emblematic of a world of violence and passion. As Calvin wrote, paraphrasing Cicero, "nothing touches the audience more than the evocation of the dead who are brought from the regions of hell"⁵⁶. The words of the ghosts of the dead carried especial weight. La Fontaine wrote in a fable entitled *Le Pouvoir des Fables* about an orator who displayed all the effects of

⁵³ *Conferentie gehouden inde Helle tusschen de Ziele van Gustavus koninck van Sweden ende de Ziele van Oliver Protector van Engelandt* (1660) Knuttel 8240; *Vervolgh vande Tweede ende naerder Conferentie en beraetslaginge inde Helle* (1660) Knuttel 8242; *Schryvens uyt de Helle van derde ende naerdere Conferentie ende 't samen-sprake gehouden tusschen GUSTAVUS, OLIVIER, MAZARIN en JAN DE WITH* (1660) Knuttel 8243.

⁵⁴ M. Closson, "Le 'Theatre des Spectres' de Pierre le Loyer," in *Dramaturgies de l'ombre*, ed. F. Lavocat and F. Lecercle (Rennes, 2005), 121.

⁵⁵ F. Lecercle, "l'Automate et le facteur de troubles. Les usages de l'ombre dans la tragedie de la Renaissance," in *Dramaturgies de l'ombre*, ed. Lavocat and Lecercle, 31–32, 34.

⁵⁶ O. Millet, 'Faire Parler les Morts. L'Ombre Protatique comme Prosopopée dans les Tragédies Françaises de la Renaissance', in *Dramaturgies de l'ombre*, ed. Lavocat and Lecercle, 88.

which rhetoric is capable, when “he caused the dead to speak”.⁵⁷ Ghosts could also render advice. In his *Poetique* of 1561, Jules-Caesar Scaliger wrote of ghosts that you can attribute to them two things, words (*sermones*) and reflections (*consilia*).⁵⁸ However, ghosts could also have a comic element. In his *Della poesia rappresentativa e del mondo di rappresentare le favole sceniche*, Angelo Ingegneri described how the difficulty of producing an effective spectre on stage could lead to unseemly hilarity and in later drama the ghost became an intended figure of fun.

We see the full range of ghostly roles in the pamphlet literature surrounding Concini and de Witt. One writer proposed an imaginary dialogue in hell between Concini and Ravaillac, the assassin of Henry IV. In the pamphlet the pair argue who has the greater honour of having done more damage to France while the figure of the devil inquires rhetorically, “don’t we suffer enough in hell without this”.⁵⁹ The person of the devil suggests that this is at least superficially a Christian concept of hell but another writer’s hell is that of Pluto’s underworld where the ferryman Charon is warned by Alecto that they must take care that Concini does not usurp the government down there as he did in France.⁶⁰ In both these tracts there is strong comic element. The ghosts of the De Witts are cast in a rather more sombre mould. In a pamphlet published in both Dutch and German the ghost of John de Witt admitted that he had oppressed the citizens and sold the provinces and towns of the Republic to the French. In a spirit of remorse he issued a warning to his former friends and allies that they must now be loyal to the Prince of Orange and renounce the Perpetual Edict by which the stadtholderate in Holland was abolished.⁶¹ In another discourse from hell the brothers John and Cornelis admit their errors with regard to the Prince of Orange and urge him not to trust his pretended friends.⁶² In a drama published in pamphlet form the ghost of

⁵⁷ ‘(...) il fit parler les morts.’

⁵⁸ O. Millet, “Faire parler les morts. L’ombre prototypique comme prosopée dans les tragédies françaises de la Renaissance,” in *Dramaturgies de l’ombre*, ed. Lavocat and Lecerle, 88, 91.

⁵⁹ *Le Testament et Dernière Volonté du Sieur Conchini de Conchino, iadis prétendu Mareschal de France* (1617), 2, 6.

⁶⁰ *La Descente du Marquis d’Ancre aux Enfers, son combat et sa rencontre avec Maître Guillaume* (1617), 3–4.

⁶¹ *Waerachtigh verhael van twee wonderlycke voorteecken en die Godt Almachtigh gelieft heeft te openbaren omtrent de Stadt Arnheim* (1672) Knuttel 10080, 10081.

⁶² *De Spreekende Geesten van Jan en Cornelis de Witt, Afgesonden door Mercurius* (1672) Knuttel 10404.

John de Witt appeared to his daughter and warned her that death is the reward for all traitors who try to deny lawful authority and the true prince.⁶³

Ghosts also confessed their sins. Supporters of the House of Orange had always alleged that John de Witt had directed his hatred at the person of William III rather than at the nation's enemies. During the first Anglo-Dutch war (1652–1654) Admiral Tromp the Elder was an acknowledged supporter of William III, his vessel sporting the Prince's flag. Tromp's death in battle in 1653 unleashed accusations that his fellow sea captains, on the instructions of De Witt, had deliberately abandoned him to his fate. Following the French invasion in 1672, De Witt faced similar accusations of conniving with the enemy rather than permitting the promotion of the Prince of Orange to the stadtholderate. Under the circumstances it is not surprising that the old accusations concerning the death of Tromp resurfaced at this point. One anonymous author alleged that the captain had been deliberately sacrificed as part of the agreement between Holland and England on the Exclusion of the Prince of Orange in 1654.⁶⁴ In a pamphlet of 1672, written after the death of the brothers De Witt, the soul of the mutilated John roams hell while admitting to his treachery.

(...) Who is the cause of the death
Of Tromp, is it not I? I left him in the lurch;
I it was who enabled this deed by secret missives
And encouraged Captains and Crewmen to let him perish
In command of the battle.⁶⁵

The ghost has played a role in drama from Seneca to the Renaissance and this rhetoric seemingly belongs to this genre. In the case of Concini it is his words which condemn him. He candidly admits his desire to destroy France. In the case of John de Witt there is acknowledgement of guilt. He is a traitor and has earned his just reward. In both the French and Dutch pamphlet literature the scene in hell serves as a judgement on those who have not been judged by an earthly court of law but have died at the hands of individuals or the mob. In the same way English pamphlet literature features the ghost of Oliver

⁶³ N.V.M. *Tragoedie van den Bloedigen Haeg ofte Broeder-Moort van Jan en Cornelis de Wit* (1672) Knuttel 10452, 61.

⁶⁴ *Genees-Middelen voor Hollants Qualen. Vertoonende de quade regeringe der Loevesteinse Factie* (1672) Knuttel 10376, 10.

⁶⁵ *De Hel in Roer ofte de Verslaegenheydt en schrick van de onderaerdsche Geesten* (1672) Knuttel 10415, 5.

Cromwell, the regicide, who equally was not brought to judgment during his mortal life.

Conclusion

To conclude, in the deaths of Concini and the brothers De Witt pamphlet literature plays several important roles. Firstly the writers formulate the accusation of tyranny. This may be voiced directly or implied as when, for example, the subject is referred to as having accumulated all political power and patronage in their hands. In both cases, it is alleged that the rightful defenders of the state have been excluded from authority; in the case of France these are King Louis XIII and the Princes of the Blood, in the case of the Dutch Republic the Prince of Orange. This has been achieved by winning over key individuals. Concini was the favourite of the regent Marie de Medici while the archetypal Holland Maid (*Hollandsche Maeght*), whose affections De Witt secured, stood for the leading towns of the province of Holland and their regents. This analysis throws an interesting light upon the circumstances in the Dutch Republic in 1672. Other cases of 'tyrannicide', such as that of Concini or the brothers Guise, were clearly aimed at restoring the authority of a monarch and even the most avid supporters of the Prince of Orange would hesitate to afford him that role. Yet within the constitution of the Republic, he was clearly felt to have an authority bestowed on him by the gratitude of the people for the sacrifices of his forefathers which the brothers De Witt had usurped. They had made themselves 'princes' and sought to assume the role which was rightfully his.

Elements of 'foreignness' were alleged against both subjects. Concini, the Italian, was easy prey for accusations of favouring alien subjects and powers and seeking to foment discord in France. Against the De Witts the allegations appear rather more contrived. Suggestions that John was banking large sums of money abroad appear to be taken from the repertoire of pamphlet literature directed at the 'treacherous over-mighty subject', and it is worthy of note that these charges were not pursued. Instead the De Witts were accused of conniving with and receiving money from a foreign power in order to pursue a policy directed against the Prince of Orange and the perceived national interest.

In the case of Concini and Cornelis de Witt, there is a symbolic rehearsal of their deaths which is reported in contemporary pamphlet

literature. In the case of Concini the mob had invaded his residence in the Faubourg St Germain and torn apart the portraits of him and his wife. The image of Cornelis de Witt which had graced the town hall in Dordrecht was chillingly dismembered. Here we appear to be witnessing a ritual which pamphlet literature transmits but does not itself create. However, there is no doubt that in the cases of Concini and the de Witts political polemic adopts a murderous tone which is intended to facilitate their death.

In the case of Concini, his death is written about as if it is the inevitable consequence of his actions. The aim here surely is to create a climate in which the key figure, in this case Louis XIII, is emboldened to take action against the overmighty subject in the knowledge that the nation is behind him. In the case of the de Witts, there is no political authority willing to consider judicial murder. His judges in 1672 determined that Cornelis de Witt was to be exiled but not executed. The pamphlet literature of the time provides justification for action beyond the scope of the courts.

In some senses the deaths of the individuals require a collective rite. Hence the details of their deaths and the hideous treatment of their corpses are widely circulated so that the people can, as they must, act as the spectators and participants in this ritual disposal. It is as if there is a specific literary genre, found in political pamphlets in France and the Dutch Republic, which transcends national boundaries and which prepares and incites the readers to contemplate the death of the quarry and enables them to participate in it, confident that theirs is the judgment of the just.

It is well to remember that such calls do not always succeed. In his study of the pamphleteering of the Frondes, Hubert Carrier pointed out that works attacking Concini in the critical period before his death were republished this time with Mazarin as the object of their attack.⁶⁶ Nonetheless, the wily cardinal died in his bed. However, in propitious circumstances this type of pamphlet literature could be deadly. The deaths of the brothers de Witt in The Hague became a focal point of compulsive yet appalled interest throughout Europe. When eighteenth-century English writers spoke of an individual being 'dewitted', nobody could doubt their meaning. For many Dutch citizens of the twenty-first century, the lynching of John and Cornelis de Witt

⁶⁶ H. Carrier, *La Presse de la Fronde (La Conquête de l'Opinion)* (Geneva, 1989), 308.

appears as a total aberration in their nation's history. Yet seen from the standpoint of pamphlet literature it can be considered not as a solitary phenomenon but as an early modern European example, amongst others, of what Orest Ranum describes as 'tyrannicide'.⁶⁷ Pamphlet writers do not create the political circumstances which result in these atrocities but they impose on them certain formulaic values and expressions which form part of a larger European consciousness. The familiar litany of accusations, the reporting of the destruction of images of the intended victims, the clamour for their death and the detailed accounts of the disposal of their corpses contain many of the elements of Senecan drama, a theme which is reinforced by the appearance of the ghosts of the deceased. As in a contemporary tragedy, their victims aim high and plunge like Icarus to disaster. Most of these pamphlets were written by anonymous authors, possibly insignificant individuals, but together they formed a corpus of what can truly be described as poison in print.

⁶⁷ Ranum, "The French Ritual".

THE REVOLUTION IN DUTCH FOREIGN POLICY (1688)

David Onnekink

Introduction

“Prot. Religion and Liberty – Je maintiendray”: Thus the words in the scrolls of William III’s coat of arms on the cover of his famous *Declaration of Reasons*, issued in October 1688, days after an enormous fleet had left the port of Hellevoetsluis and set sail for England.¹ In June the Prince of Orange had decided to intervene in the affairs of England where the relationship between King James II and the political nation had deteriorated beyond repair. At the same time international tension was rising. War threatened between the Holy Roman Empire and France, triggered by disputed successions in the electorates of Cologne and the Palatinate. The regional conflicts might lapse into a general war and the Dutch feared a French invasion. In his *Declaration*, “One of the most decisive publications of modern history”,² the Prince claimed that he was intervening on behalf of the Protestant religion and liberty of England. It served to generate support in England and to mobilise those who were prepared to stand up to James II. The *Declaration* became a rallying cry which boosted the Williamite interest. On the other hand, many contemporaries considered William’s motives suspect. Was he trying to gain the crown? Did he seek to crush Catholicism in England? As such the document became part of a process in which the Dutch searched for a justification for their foreign policy.

This article will argue that Dutch foreign policy was shaped and reshaped in a discursive process, in which the *Declaration* and several accompanying pamphlets played a pivotal role. Historians have tended to consider the *Declaration* as devious and irrelevant. Irrelevant,

¹ *The Declaration of His Highness William Henry, By the Grace of God, Prince of Orange, &c., Of the Reasons inducing him to appear in Armes in the Kingdome of England, for Preserving of the Protestant Religion, and for Restoring the Lawes and Liberties of ENGLAND, SCOTLAND and IRELAND* (1688) Knuttel 2773.

² J.I. Israel, “Introduction,” in *The Anglo-Dutch Moment Essays on the Glorious Revolution and its World Impact*, ed. J.I. Israel (Cambridge, 1991), 13.

because, as propaganda, it was merely intended to pacify public opinion, which was deemed unimportant for foreign policy anyway.³ Indeed, few historians have taken a real interest in the impact of propaganda and public opinion in 1688.⁴ For Dutch historians, there is the additional problem that the *Declaration* almost entirely deals with affairs in England. However, the invasion, the succession to the throne, the alliance with England and the war with France were contested in the Dutch Republic.⁵ Moreover, the document was issued in the Dutch Republic in large quantities, and arguably William needed to justify his actions back home as well. The *Declaration* was therefore important in galvanising support on the home-front.

The document has also been regarded as devious, because it was seen as part of a ruse to cover up William's 'real' intentions: His intervention in England was obviously intended to construct an anti-French alliance, and needed no further analysis.⁶ It was the logical continuation of Dutch foreign policy since 1672, which was aimed at constructing a counterbalance against France, a policy which ultimately yielded results with the Peace of Utrecht in 1713. Hence historians have paid little attention to the character of Dutch foreign policy in 1688, which was regarded as a typical moment in Dutch long-term strategy. Indeed, a long-term overview of Dutch foreign policy does not even mention the Dutch invasion of 1688.⁷ As a result, historians have missed the fact that 1688 constituted a revolution in Dutch foreign policy. Despite the defensive rhetoric about French aggression and the necessity for intervention, the fact remains that the Dutch, for the first time, staged a pre-emptive strike on a major neighbouring country.

³ E.g. A.G.H. Bachrach, *De wereld van Willem III & Mary* (Amsterdam, 1989); W. Troost, *William III, the Stadholder-King. A Political Biography* (Aldershot, 2005). An exception is J.I. Israel, "Introduction".

⁴ But see Israel, "Introduction"; Tony Claydon, "William III's *Declaration of Reasons* and the Glorious Revolution," *The Historical Journal* 39:1 (1996); J.I. Israel, "Propaganda in the Making of the Glorious Revolution," in *Across the Narrow Seas*, ed. S. Roach (London, 1991); L.G. Schwoerer "Propaganda in the Revolution of 1688–1689," *American Historical Review* 132 (1977).

⁵ Consensus is stressed, although Petra Dreiskämper has emphasised the fact that consensus did not come easily: P. Dreiskämper, *Aan de vooravond van de overtocht naar Engeland. Een onderzoek naar de verhouding tussen Willem III en Amsterdam in de Staten van Holland, 1685–1688* (Utrecht, 1996).

⁶ C.H. Slechte, "De propagandacampagnes voor koning-stadhouder Willem III. Een verkenning," in *Jaarboek Oranje-Nassau Museum 2002*, ed. R. van den Berg (Rotterdam, 2003), 86.

⁷ J.C. Boogman, "Achtergronden, tendenties en tradities van het buitenlands beleid van Nederland (eind zestiende eeuw – 1940)," in *De kracht van Nederland. Internationale positie en buitenlands beleid*, ed. N.C.F. van Sas (Bloemendaal, 1991).

The apparent misleading nature and insignificance of pamphlets have generally led historians to treat them merely “as decorations for their texts”.⁸ However, since the work of John Pocock and Quentin Skinner, the connection between politics and discourse has been established more clearly. Language cannot be separated from policy, for any “political legitimacy is embedded in the set of political vocabularies available at any given time”.⁹ Following this view, several historians have made it clear that the *Declaration* played an important if not crucial role in the Glorious Revolution in England, as it defined the parameters of political discourse.¹⁰ According to Lois Schwoerer, “the *Declaration* shaped past events and present policies”.¹¹

Whereas there is now an emerging interest in domestic policy and public opinion, what has hardly been done is to connect foreign policy to foreign policy discourse. As Lene Hansen argued, “foreign policies need an account, or a story, of the problems and issues they are trying to address”.¹² Rather than having a clear policy, a straightforward story, the Dutch, in 1688, were perplexed and anxious about the dangerous situation, and tried to find a new course for their foreign policy. This needed to be justified, but first, it needed to be devised. This article aims to understand the *Declaration* as significant in the development of the revolution in Dutch foreign policy, which was achieved through a discursive process as encapsulated in foreign policy documents and pamphlets.

The Declaration

The *Declaration*, as well as the *Declaration* for Scotland, was finalised on 10 October 1688.¹³ In about eight folios the situation in England

⁸ Schwoerer, “Propaganda”, 844.

⁹ D.S.A. Bell, “The Cambridge School and World Politics: Critical Theory, History and Conceptual Change”: 3 (<http://www.theglobalsite.ac.uk/press/103bell.htm>, last consulted on 21 April 2010); J. Pocock, “Languages and their Implications. The Transformation of the Study of Political Thought,” in J. Pocock, *Politics, Language & Time. Essays on Political Thought & History* (New York, 1971).

¹⁰ Israel, “Introduction”; Claydon, “William III’s *Declaration of Reasons*”; Israel, “Propaganda”; Schwoerer, “Propaganda in the Revolution of 1688–1689”.

¹¹ Schwoerer, “Propaganda”: 854.

¹² L. Hansen, *Security as Practice. Discourse analysis and the Bosnian War* (Abingdon, 2006), xvi.

¹³ *The Declaration of His Highness William Henry* (1688) Knuttel 12773. It is frequently suggested that the *Declaration* was published on 10 October, but in fact that was the day that the final draft was finished and William signed and sealed it.

was analysed, and it was concluded that the religion and liberty of that country were in jeopardy. Intervention was necessary. On 11 October the English ambassador in The Hague, Marquis d'Albeville, reported to Secretary of State Charles Middleton about a policy document being written by William with the aid of English authors.¹⁴ On 25 October, according to the English chargé d'affaires in The Hague, Daniel Petit, orders had been given from The Hague to print the *Declaration*.¹⁵ However, it was not to be disseminated until the invasion fleet was well under way, not only to disguise the purpose of the operation but also to protect the safety of William's adherents in England.¹⁶ The *Declaration* was to be dispersed upon the landing of the invasion force in England, which turned out to be on 5 November.¹⁷ On 25 October d'Albeville declared that "The manifesto or declaration can not be yett had at any rate, for i have offer'd considerably for it".¹⁸ Only on 30 October did d'Albeville manage to get a copy of the *Declaration*;¹⁹ the French ambassador in The Hague, Comte d'Avaux, beat him to it, for he managed to steal a number of pages directly from the printer with the help of an employee in the printing office.²⁰ The second *Declaration*, an appendix in response to recent developments in England, was written on 24 October.²¹

The *Declaration* was published in about twenty versions in English, French, German, Dutch and Latin.²² There is no record of the *Declaration* being officially distributed by the Dutch state, although foreign ambassadors (except for the French and English ones) in The Hague received copies.²³ In total 60,000 copies were printed in

E.g. A. van der Kuyjl, *De glorieuze overtocht. De expeditie van Willem III naar Engeland in 1688* (Amsterdam, 1988), 22. All dates in this article are in New Style, i.e. the Gregorian calendar, which was used in the Dutch Republic. The Julian Calendar, used in England, was 10 days behind.

¹⁴ British Library, Additional Manuscripts (hereafter BL Add Mss), 41816, d'Albeville to Middleton, 1 October 1688 OS.

¹⁵ BL Add Mss 41816, f° 234, Petit to Middleton 15 October OS.

¹⁶ BL Add Mss 41816, d'Albeville to Middleton 24 October 1688 OS.

¹⁷ *Bishop Burnet's History of His Own Time*, 2 vols (London, 1840) vol. 2, 492.

¹⁸ BL Add Mss 41816, f° 238, d'Albeville to Middleton 15 October 1688 OS.

¹⁹ BL Add Mss 41816, d'Albeville to Middleton 20 October 1688 OS.

²⁰ Jan Wagenaar, *Vaderlandsche historie vervattend de geschiedenissen der nu Vereenigde Nederlanden, inzonderheid die van Holland, van de vroegste tyden af (...)* 21 vols (Amsterdam, 1770, 2nd edition), vol. 15, 459.

²¹ "His Highnesses Additional Declaration", in *The Declaration of His Highness*, Knuttel 12773.

²² Israel, *Anglo-Dutch Moment*, 13.

²³ Schwoerer, "Propaganda": 854.

Amsterdam, London, Edinburgh, Magdeburg and Hamburg.²⁴ According to Jonathan Israel, "The pamphlet's subsequent distribution was a masterpiece of co-ordinated propaganda which ensured that the *Declaration* had an exceptional, indeed, enormous, impact not only in England and the United Provinces but generally."²⁵

The *Declaration* was written in several draft versions.²⁶ A draft by Henry Sidney had been received in late August, and William instructed his favourite, Hans Willem Bentinck, to discuss it with Grand Pensionary Gaspar Fagel and Everard van Weede van Dijkveld, one of William's senior advisers.²⁷ The Prince himself apparently took no great part in the discussions, but wished to be informed and at crucial points expressed his opinion on the document.²⁸ The final version of the *Declaration* was compiled by Fagel from various concepts and abridged by Gilbert Burnet, who also translated it into English. The Whig radical John Wildman altered a number of sections, some of which were accepted, others were deemed too radical.²⁹ After these alterations, the *Declaration* was printed.³⁰ Although compiled from Whig drafts, the document also had a distinctly Dutch feeling. Apart from Fagel, Bentinck, for instance, was also involved in the discussions of the document.³¹ Obviously the document was primarily aimed at an English audience, but the very fact that Dutch advisers were intimately involved in the drafting of the document is a pointer to Dutch influence. The same can be said for the second or additional *Declaration* of late October 1688, also drafted by Fagel and probably edited by Burnet.³²

²⁴ Israel, "Propaganda"; cf. Petit to Middleton 15 October OS, BL Add Mss 41816, f^o 234. Burnet speaks of "many thousands", *Bishop Burnet's History*, II, 492.

²⁵ Israel, "Introduction".

²⁶ For a thorough overview of the evolution of the *Declaration*, see L.G. Schwoerer, *The Declaration of Rights 1689* (Baltimore/London, 1981), 105 ff.

²⁷ William to Bentinck 29 August 1688, *Correspondentie van Willem III en van Hans Willem Bentinck, eersten graaf van Portland*, ed. N. Japikse, RGP Kleine Reeks 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 5 vols (The Hague, 1927–1937), vol. 23 (1927), 49.

²⁸ William to Bentinck 29 August 1688, *Correspondentie*, ed. Japikse, vol. 23, 49; *Bishop Burnet's History*, 492.

²⁹ Wagenaar, *Vaderlandsche historie*, vol. 15, 456; *Bishop Burnet's History*, 492.

³⁰ *Bishop Burnet's History*, 495; BL Add Mss 41816, d'Albeville? to Middleton? 1 October 1688 OS.

³¹ See his marginal notes in Nottingham University Library (hereafter NUL), PwA 2249, a draft of the *Declaration* to the army. Bentinck's marginal corrections are also evident in NUL PwA 2288, a draft of the Association of Exeter, 1688.

³² According to Japikse the draft was made on 29 October, *Correspondentie*, ed. Japikse, vol. 24 (1928), 620–621. The basis for this contention is unclear to me. There is no evidence of a date in the document, and the final draft is dated 24 October.

Nicolaas Japikse noticed that the Dutch first draft and the final English version differed distinctively, which implies that there was a lot of discussion going on between the Dutch and the English.³³

The most astounding fact about the *Declaration* and indeed the invasion that followed was that it was officially undertaken by the Prince of Orange, rather than the Dutch Republic as such. As Jonathan Israel has pointed out, it was the Prince of Orange who issued the *Declaration* and who claimed responsibility for the intervention, not the Dutch state.³⁴ William gained the support of the States of Holland which adopted a Secret Resolution on 29 September to that effect.³⁵ On 26 October William appeared in the assembly of the States of Holland in which he thanked them for their support and underlined his reasons for leaving. His paraphrased speech to the States of Holland, *Reasons for Leaving*, was published as a pamphlet.³⁶ The States General pledged their support in a resolution adopted on 28 October, which was subsequently published.³⁷ The *Declaration* therefore needs to be analysed in the context of additional published documents.

Ideology

These three pamphlets, the *Declaration*, the resolution and the Prince's speech, together set out the ideological motivation for the expedition to England. Dutch historians in general have been reluctant, to say the least, to suggest that political ideology did play a role in Dutch foreign policy. The invasion was motivated by either William's dynastic ambitions, the need to create a balance of power against France or to

³³ *Correspondentie*, ed. Japikse, vol. 24, 620–621.

³⁴ Israel, "The Dutch Role".

³⁵ *Secreete Resolutien van de Ed. Groot Mog. Heeren Staaten van Hollandt. Beginnende met den Jaare 1679 en Eyndigende met den Jaare 1696 inclus, 17 vols* (The Hague, 1653–1795), vol. 5 (1791), 229–235.

³⁶ *Redenen van Afscheyt van Sijn Hoogheyt den Heere Prince van Orange, gedaen ter Vergaderinge van de Ed. Groot-Mogende Heeren Staten van Hollandt ende West-Vrieslandt* (1688) Knuttel 12783; *Bishop Burnet's History*, 496.

³⁷ *Resolutie inhoudende de redenen, die haer Hoogh Mogende hebben bewogen, om Syne Hoogheydt, in Persoon naar Engelandt overgaende, met Schepen ende Militie te assisteren, in dato den 28 October 1688* (1688) Knuttel 12785. There is a copy in the archive of the Polish Ambassador Antoine Moreau, BL Add Mss 38495; Wagenaar, *Vaderlandsche historie*, vol. 15, 468.

safeguard Dutch commercial interests.³⁸ Since the *Declaration* is concerned with none of these arguments and focuses primarily on William's proclaimed motive to safeguard the religion and liberties of England, the document has been regarded as disingenuous.³⁹ According to Slechte, for instance, "The *Declaration* is a good example of a pamphlet written by propagandists who know what they want the people to believe, and who phrase it in such a way that the people actually do believe them."⁴⁰ However, the juxtaposition between 'propaganda' and 'real aim' is artificial. It suggests that propaganda consists of conscious 'lies' and that people who read it are unable to discern the 'truth'. It is more useful to consider propaganda as what Sheryl Tuttle Ross described as "epistemologically defect", that is, containing a message which cannot be verified or falsified.⁴¹ The central message that William as Prince of Orange intervened to save the religion and liberty of England is impossible to verify, since it is a matter of interpretation,

³⁸ Simon Groenveld emphasised strategic considerations. In his view, William's intervention in England can be explained by a desire to restore the balance of power in Europe through acquiring England as an ally against France. S. Groenveld, "Jequippe une Flotte très Considerable. The Dutch Side of the Glorious revolution," in *The Revolutions of 1688*, ed. R. Beddard (Oxford, 1988), 213–246. Wout Troost, a student of Groenveld's, also fully concentrates on strategic considerations, and sees 1688 as the beginning of Balance of Power politics: W. Troost, "De buitenlandse politiek van Willem III en het begin van de Britse evenwichtspolitiek," in *Jaarboek* ed. Van den Berg. Jonathan Israel rather emphasised commercial considerations. In his view, the Dutch response was triggered by the French *guerre de commerce* which stifled the Dutch economy. Israel, "The Dutch Role". Lastly, a dynastic interpretation was proposed by Stephen Baxter who argued that William was essentially acting in his capacity as a Stuart prince trying to safeguard his inheritance. S. Baxter, *William III* (London, 1966). Cf. E.O.G. Haitsma-Mulier, "Willem III in de geschiedschrijving," 22–23, in *Jaarboek*, ed. Van den Berg; This dynastic interpretation was also endorsed by E.H. Kossmann, "Koning-Stadhouder Willem III," in *Vergankelijkheid en continuïteit. Opstellen over geschiedenis*, ed. E.H. Kossmann (Amsterdam, 1995).

³⁹ That is not to say that historians have completely neglected to pay attention to the ideological and religious context of the invasion. According to Groenveld, the motto of the invasion, religion and liberty, "was more than propaganda. It also showed the real aim which the Dutch attached to the enterprise: the conclusion of the urgently needed Anglo-Dutch alliance against Louis XIV of France, who in September had invaded the Rhineland, thus initiating the Nine Years War; Groenveld, "Jequippe une Flotte très Considerable", 241. However, Groenveld mainly emphasised the strategic factors.

⁴⁰ Slechte, "De propagandacampagnes voor koning-stadhouder Willem III", 86; A. van der Kuijl likewise, argued that William wanted to safeguard his dynastic prospects as well as the balance of Europe, but "in the propaganda battle (...) obviously other motives were used". Van der Kuijl, *De glorieuze overtocht*, 19–20.

⁴¹ Sheryl Tuttle Ross, "Understanding Propaganda. The Epistemic Merit Model and Its Application to Art," *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 36:1 (2002).

but it did streamline and constrict ensuing foreign policy decisions. The purpose of William's propaganda was to construct a new interpretative framework in order to find purpose and direction for his foreign policy.

Indeed, the publication can not be regarded as 'mere' rhetoric, for the very act of publishing the *Declaration* as a pamphlet was a foreign policy act in itself. By defining his foreign policy, William both created support for, as well as attracted criticism and scrutiny capable of constraining his freedom of manoeuvre. When the Prince arrived in England and James expressed willingness to negotiate, William's advisers discussed the possibility of taking advantage of the situation. William's favourite, Bentinck, was however adamant to quell such initiatives. The *Declaration* had stipulated, Bentinck argued, that Parliament would examine the truth about the suppositious Prince of Wales, "and that His Highness was to stick to his declaration".⁴² Bentinck therefore fully realised that the *Declaration* was now leading a life of its own. This was precisely the reason why William had been reluctant to attribute such an important role to Parliament in his *Declaration*, as he understood it would limit his options.⁴³ However, once the *Declaration* had been published, it became impossible to retract that statement. The *Declaration*, as a pamphlet, had become a political actor in its own right.

This raises the question as to the nature of propaganda, its possibilities and its constraints. British historians have studied how, as a 'position paper' of the Prince,⁴⁴ the *Declaration* galvanised the Williamites. At the same time, as Lois Schwoerer noted, since William promised in his *Declaration* to leave the decision about kingship to Parliament, it limited his scope for action.⁴⁵ Likewise, Tony Claydon observed that "As William lost control of his manifesto, those who wished to block his progress found they could adopt the rhetoric of the document and deploy it against its original sponsor."⁴⁶ Unlike Israel and Schwoerer, Claydon thinks that the *Declaration* in the long run did not aid William,

⁴² Entry 12 December. 1688, *Journal van Constantijn Huygens, den Zoon, van 21 Oct. 1688 tot 2 Sept. 1696*, 2 vols (Utrecht, 1876), vol. I-i, 34. Cf. William to Danby 12 December 1688 OS, *Correspondentie*, ed. Japikse, vol. 28 (1937), 84.

⁴³ William to Bentinck 29 August 1688, *Correspondentie*, ed. Japikse, vol. 23, 49.

⁴⁴ Phrase from Schwoerer, "Propaganda": 871.

⁴⁵ Schwoerer, "Propaganda": 871.

⁴⁶ Claydon, "William III's *Declaration of Reasons*", 88.

but he shares their notion that this was a highly influential pamphlet that in actual fact changed the course of the Glorious Revolution by developing a discourse that set the standard and created an interpretative framework for the debates in England in 1688–1689. The following will therefore attempt to analyse the language used by the *Declaration*, to see how the *Declaration* shaped Dutch foreign policy discourse.

Drafts

Although historians have been aware of the existence of several drafts of the *Declaration*, these have never really been studied in detail. Although obviously the final draft plays a crucial role, the first drafts can reveal more about the motives of the actors and the decisions taken. In particular, the first drafts provide a much clearer idea of how William III would have liked to justify the invasion. There is an original draft of the final version of the *Declaration* in the Koninklijk Huisarchief in The Hague, with marginal notes by Gilbert Burnet.⁴⁷ There are also several drafts of the additional declaration and the declaration for English soldiers in Bentinck's archive in Nottingham University Library.⁴⁸ Bentinck was involved in discussing the *Declaration*, and at least one of those documents contains some marginal notes in Bentinck's handwriting.⁴⁹ Among these manuscripts is a first draft of the *Declaration* as well as the additional declaration.⁵⁰ According to Lois Schwoerer, the first draft of the *Declaration* has been lost,⁵¹ but document PwA 2243 appears to be a pre-cursor to the *Declaration* which has not been studied at all. The document is by an unknown hand, written in English, with a French translation.⁵² It is difficult to know who wrote this document, or when it was written – neither internal nor external evidence provides a clear clue. The document starts with emphasising the actual military invasion (“Seing necessity hath constrayned us, to enter this Kingdom with armed Troops”), which could suggest that it was written after the invasion.

⁴⁷ Koninklijk Huisarchief The Hague, A16-IXa-15.

⁴⁸ NUL PwA 2248 and PwA 2249.

⁴⁹ NUL PwA 2249.

⁵⁰ NUL PwA 2246–2252. Cf. NUL PwA 2288.

⁵¹ L.G. Schwoerer, *The Declaration of Rights 1689* (Baltimore, 1981), 109n.

⁵² NUL PwA 2243 a and b. French translation PwA 2244.

However, most likely it was written in anticipation of the event. It deals with similar themes as the final *Declaration*, and refers to itself as “this our Declaration”, and must therefore be a precursor to the final draft.⁵³ Although it is written in English and French, it might be a translation of Fagel’s original document, since it is very much written from a Dutch perspective, unlike the final draft.⁵⁴ This draft version of the *Declaration* contains some eight folios and conveys a general message similar to that of the final draft of the *Declaration* but is phrased completely differently. Burnet may have referred to it in his *History*:

The declaration that the prince was to publish came to be considered. A great many draughts were sent from England by different hands. All these were put in the pensioner Fagel’s hands, who upon that made a long and heavy draught, founded on the grounds of the civil law, and of the law of nations. That was brought to me to be put in English. I saw he was fond of his own draught: and the prince left that matter wholly to him: yet I got it to be much shortened, though it was still too long.⁵⁵

Burnet’s explanation only partly seems to relate to PwA 2243, which is not much longer than the final draft, and not merely shortened but fundamentally rewritten. Since there is a French translation already made, we must presume that this was seriously considered to be the final product and that it may have been a first draft written by Fagel. Whoever wrote this, it is clustered in the archive with the final version of the *Declaration*, and it was almost certainly discussed as a policy document.

Justification: just war

It would be well worth studying this document in detail, but right now we are mainly concerned with how William and his entourage would have wanted to justify their actions. Two elements stand out. The first remarkable observation is that the first folio of the document is not focusing on England at all, but entirely cast in just war rhetoric to legitimise Dutch intervention. The document opens with the following lines: “Seing necessity hath constrayned us, to enter this Kingdome with armed Troopes, wee are obliged by the Laws of God, in nature, to declare unto the wholl Realme, the occasion, causes, and ends of our

⁵³ I am thankfull for the suggestions of Elizabeth Edwards on this matter.

⁵⁴ It would be worth exploring Fagel’s archive to look for a similar draft.

⁵⁵ *Bishop Burnet’s History*, 492.

coming ...”⁵⁶ The defensive rhetoric (the emphasis on response to aggression, encapsulated in the words “necessity” and “obliged”) was to convince the reader that the Dutch needed no further justification as they were not the initiators of aggression. A bit further on, the same message is reiterated with more force, bringing home the message that this was not a conquest: “We are so far from intentions of warr or off bloodshed in this kingdome, unless we shall be forced thereunto in defence of the legall Government, the Protestant Rights, and our own ...”⁵⁷ Indeed, throughout the whole of the document, the contention that foreign troops are not being brought into the kingdom of England for conquest is mentioned ten times. The message that “We abhor the thoughts of Conquest, or subduing this kingdome, to our force” is continually reiterated.⁵⁸ Since the opening paragraphs are much more concerned with a justification for the foreign invasion, it is reasonable to suggest that this document must have been conceived by a Dutchman. It also seems to be in line with Burnet’s contention that Fagel’s first version paid specific interest to the “laws of nations”.⁵⁹ The focus on just war rhetoric is also clear in the first draft of *His Highnesses Additional Declaration*, written by Fagel, which is more concerned with Dutch interests. The document frequently uses a particular term which is of importance: *rechtveerdigh*, meaning righteous or just: Again emphasis is on the justification of the armed invasion by a foreign power.⁶⁰ In Burnet’s version this phrase has disappeared, and the final draft dwells much less on this issue.⁶¹

The just war and religious discourse merged to emphasise transnational Protestant loyalty:

And we believe by the causless reflexions (of ill will to the Liberty of England) cast uppon the High and Mighty Lords, the States of the United Provinces, in the Kings late Declaration that they allso for assisting us, for their own defense shall be declared enemys to the Peace and Freedome of the English Protestants, tho’ it be manifest that their chiefe security (under God) in their profession of the Protestant Relligion and in the enjoyment of their Libertyes, is so involved in the security, and freedome of the English Protestants, that they must stand or fall together.⁶²

⁵⁶ NUL PwA 2243 a f° 1.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ *Bishop Burnet’s History*, 492.

⁶⁰ *His Highnesses Additional Declaration*, Knuttel 12773.

⁶¹ *The Declaration of His Highness William Henry*, Knuttel 12773.

⁶² NUL PwA 2243 a f° 1.

Ordinary just war discourse, most famously employed by Hugo Grotius, did allow for the possibility of a Prince invading for the sake of an ally, but at no point did Grotius allow religion to be a justification for intervention. Grotius, like the Spanish jurists Francisco de Vitoria and Francisco Suárez, had been responsible for a transformation of just war theory into a more secular interpretation. The author of PwA 2243 is, therefore, on dangerous grounds. For the issue of intervention for a religious cause had been posed before, and answered in full, by one of the more radical theorists of the French wars of religion: Philippe Duplessis-Mornay in his *Defense of Liberty Against Tyrants* (1579).⁶³ He posed the question as to whether “Christian Princes lawfully may and ought to succour those Subjects which are afflicted for true Religion, or oppress by unjust servitude, and whose sufferings are either for the kingdome of Christ, or for the liberty of their own state”.⁶⁴ And the answer was affirmative: According to Mornay, a prince has a duty to intervene on behalf of an oppressed people. “If a Prince tyrannize over the people, a neighbour Prince ought to yield succours as freely and willingly to the people, as he would doe to the Prince his Brother if the people mutined against him”.⁶⁵ Mornay argued that a war for the sake of Protestantism needs to be defensive, for “We hold that the church is neither advanced nor edified by these material weapons. However, by these arms it is secured and preserved from the violence by enemies who will not by any means endure the increase of it.”⁶⁶ Likewise, the author of PwA 2243 notes: “We are far from the unchristian thoughts of promoting by force of armed Troopes, the Religion of Jesus Christ, which is planted by God only in the minds or soules of men”.⁶⁷ However, when religion and fundamental rights are subverted, “defensive armes are just and necessary.”⁶⁸

Although there is no direct proof of the influence of Mornay’s political thought, the connotations must have seemed obvious to contemporaries. Although Mornay’s thought was considered to be very radical, his influence on the development of the political thought of the Dutch

⁶³ Philippe Duplessis-Mornay, *Defense of Liberty Against Tyrants* (1689) [transl. of the original of 1579].

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 135.

⁶⁵ Mornay, *Defense of Liberty*, 147.

⁶⁶ Mornay, *Defense of Liberty*, in the chapter “Whether it is lawful to take up arms in defense of religion”.

⁶⁷ NUL Pwa 2243 a f° 1.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, f° 2.

Revolt in general, and on the publications of William I of Orange in particular, makes the suggested connection not altogether implausible.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, it was probably the case that the rooting in radical theory was considered imprudent, to say the least, and the linkage of Christian duty and just war completely vanished from the final draft, presumably because it was too easily associated with a religious war.

Justification: the religious dimension

But although in the final *Declaration*, this radical perspective on religious warfare was phased out almost completely, it still developed a language to describe the international conflict also in confessional terms, a point often dismissed by historians. The *Declaration* constructed a “confessional chronology” which could trace a religious struggle against Catholicism ever since the Dutch Revolt. The semantic framing was used to relay a specific interpretation of events that referred to the heroic struggles in the past of the Dutch Republic against Catholic aggression. It created a message that was difficult to prove or disprove (“epistemologically defect”), namely that William’s intervention was for the cause of religion and liberty. It did so by using a particular language that could be associated with the struggle against popery. Any Protestant Dutchman who valued his religion and liberty was prone to be at least sympathetic to the explanation of William’s cause. Indeed, although the *Declaration* did not directly seem to target a Dutch audience, the ‘religion and liberty’ rhetoric was pertinent in Dutch political discourse at the time, and in government publications, as will be shown later on. One could disagree with William’s analysis of the situation, but it would be hard to protest against any action which was undertaken for such a noble cause.

Why the religious discourse was toned down is easy to understand, for the question of religion was also problematic. Should the King of Spain and the Emperor believe that William was fighting a religious war, their support would immediately collapse. It is here that the ambiguity of Dutch propaganda strategy becomes clear. Was William’s goal to save Protestantism, to crush Catholicism, to aid the English people in their struggle against absolutism, or to win over England as an ally

⁶⁹ M. van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt 1555–1590* (Cambridge, 2002).

against France? Whereas the *Declaration* is much more targeted at an English audience, for it frequently mentions the popish enemies, in the States General's *Resolution* this language is completely absent. The *Resolution* does refer to James's attempts to reinstall Roman Catholicism, but primarily this is seen as part of a larger plan to undermine the fundamental laws of the Kingdom and establish arbitrary government. According to the resolution, William did not invade "to chase away the Roman Catholics, nor to persecute them".⁷⁰ Nor, the *Resolution* claims, are dynastic gains or conquest the aims. Such a promise had to be made to William's allies who might have been sceptical about his enterprise for 'religion and liberty'. It is significant how much effort William and the States General took to assure foreign powers that their conflict was not one to save the Protestant Religion. It is unhelpful to suggest that, because William assured his Catholic allies that his aims were strategic, his religious arguments were a pretext. In actual fact, the argument can be easily reversed: William had to disguise his 'real' intent, the concern for Protestantism, and present his invasion to the Emperor as one motivated by interest of state.⁷¹ As such, the *Declaration* verbalised the 'real aim'; the Protestant Religion was the real intent, and 'interest of state' a cover. Neither option might be true, or both may be true, which means that such analyses do not provide clear insight. For William could perceive his intervention as one that safeguarded Protestantism, whereas the Imperialists would think it benefited the Balance of Power. In fact, the *Declaration* itself was phrased in such a way that both positions were tenable. The ambiguity and the "epistemologically defect" claims of the *Declaration*, embodied by the vague 'religion and liberty' motto, were intended. As John Pocock argued, "Since its primary function is to reconcile the interests of diverse groups of persons, political language is also deliberately ambiguous or 'multivalent'. It operates on several different levels simultaneously."⁷²

The argument of historians that the Dutch invaded out of self-interest rather than for the sake of the religion and liberty of England

⁷⁰ *Resolutie*, Knuttel 12785, 5.

⁷¹ Most historians argue that religion was a pretext, but the argument is unhelpful, since the historian is not easily able to distinguish pretext from 'real' motivation in this matter. See the interesting exposition on this by K. Reppen, "What is a 'Religious War'?" in *Politics and Society in Reformation Europe*, ed. E. I. Kouri and Tom Scott (New York, 1987). Cf. D.H. Nexon, *The Struggle of Power in Early Modern Europe. Religious Conflict, Dynastic Empires & International Change* (Princeton, 2009), 1.

⁷² R.A. Jones, "The Work of J. G. A. Pocock," *Religion* 30 (2000): 400.

would have baffled Dutch statesmen in 1688, for the religion of England was of vital concern to the Dutch. It is for this reason that the draft version of the *Declaration* clearly states that Dutch security “is so involved in the security, and freedom of the English Protestants, that they must stand or fall together”.⁷³ There was nothing disingenuous about this view. In 1690 Hans Willem Bentinck wrote a private letter of encouragement to William, reminding him that his actions had always been for “the service of God, the defence of the laws of England and the liberty of that state and the interest of the whole of Europe, which was threatened with slavery, and that you never had your ambition or glory primarily in mind”.⁷⁴ This is the same language that William used in his farewell speech to the States of Holland, in which he declared that he committed himself to the “weighty task not for his own Glory. But that his only objective was to maintain the honour of God, the prosperity of our Fatherland and of the Christian Religion.”⁷⁵ The point here is not so much to find out the ‘truth’ about William’s motives, but rather to illustrate a surprising measure of consistency in his private writings and publications.

This may have been primarily the point of view of William and his entourage, but it was a view rapidly accepted by other regents as well.⁷⁶ Despite their opposition to William’s continental policy, even the burgomasters of Amsterdam were filled with fear for the safety of the Protestant Religion.⁷⁷ Since the *Declaration*’s concept of ‘religion and liberty’ was indistinct, it could be a banner acceptable to the Loevesteiners, William’s opponents, as well. Indeed, it is important and remarkable to note how this confessional Williamite language of ‘religion and liberty’ as used in the *Declaration* was suddenly penetrating official statements by the States assemblies. It was not altogether new, for it was rooted in the political thought of the Dutch Revolt, but it was not often employed in the later seventeenth century. It is, for instance,

⁷³ PwA 2243 a f° 1. Cf. footnote 62.

⁷⁴ Bentinck to William 22 March 1690, *Correspondentie*, ed. Japikse, vol. 23, 153, transl. from French.

⁷⁵ *Redenen van Afscheyt*, Knuttel 12783.

⁷⁶ This needs to be explored further, but see H. Blom, “Our Prince is King! The Impact of the Glorious Revolution on Political Debate in the Dutch Republic,” *Parliament, Estates and Representation* 10:1 (1990), who argued that the Glorious Revolution did trigger a political debate in the Republic.

⁷⁷ See D. Onnekink, “The last War of Religion? The Nine Years War and its Causes,” in *War and Religion after Westphalia (1648–1713)*, ed. D. Onnekink (Aldershot, 2009).

almost completely absent from the 1673 reply of the States General to the English declaration of war.⁷⁸ One might wonder in what way Hendrik Fagel, who had succeeded his half-brother Gaspar in 1672 as *Griffier* of the States General and had drafted the 1688 resolution, was responsible. The reference to 'religion and liberty' is specifically made in the States General's resolution, and related to the "tranquillity in Europe".⁷⁹ This was not typically the language used by the Loevesteiners. The 'religion and liberty' language was also employed in the first draft of the additional *Declaration*, where the phrase is used three times.⁸⁰ In the final draft it only appears once.⁸¹ Allusions to 'religion and liberty' appear at least one time in the additional declaration for the armed forces, which was incorporated in the *Declaration* as an addendum. It has disappeared in the final version.⁸² However, the connotation was not completely lost. The prayer, which was published as well as an addendum to the *Declaration* at the very end, is easy to overlook. It petitions God to bless the Prince, the army and the fleet, and refers to God as "Lord of Hosts", the Hebrew original word Jehovah Sabaoth being the name of God as a divine warrior.⁸³

The emotional appeal of the Prince as well as the religious motivation is much clearer in his *Redenen van Afscheyt* (*Reasons for leaving*), a report of William's farewell speech in the States of Holland on 26 October before embarking. The Prince declares his love and affection for the deputies of the States and for his Fatherland, a speech that is concluded with an appeal for their prayers, after which the Prince is moved to tears and ends his speech. It is also a sermon-like speech which echoes the public prayer that concludes William's *Declaration* of 10 October. The intervention is presented as being for the sake of the "Christian Reformed Religion".⁸⁴ The religious content of this publication is much more explicit, but was targeted at a Dutch audience only; it was not translated.

⁷⁸ *D'Antwoort van de Staten Generael der Vereenigde Nederlandsche Provintien, op de Declaratie van Oorlogh des Konings van groot Brittannien* (1672) Knuttel 10844.

⁷⁹ *Resolutie* 5–6, Knuttel 12785.

⁸⁰ Printed in *Correspondentie*, ed. Japikse, vol. 24, 620–621.

⁸¹ *The Declaration of His Highness William Henry*, Knuttel 12773.

⁸² NUL PwA 2249. Unfortunately this document is heavily damaged and the draft is almost impossible to read.

⁸³ *The Declaration of His Highness William Henry*, Knuttel 12773.

⁸⁴ The 'christelijk gereformeerde religie', meaning Dutch Reformed.

Discourse

The religious and just war discourse, then, had been polished and moderated considerably in the final version, but was still subtly employed. The language used was designed to emphasise the inherently defensive nature of the operation which many observers must have regarded as profoundly offensive. An analysis suggests that it is James, rather than William, who has undertaken an action that must be regarded as offensive, and provoked a response. The terminology is responsive and fosters the perception that William was provoked into action. This follows firstly from the very title of the documents, in which the Prince declares to be “preserving” the Protestant religion and liberties.⁸⁵ The same language is employed in the States General’s resolution, which speaks of the “restoration” of the “broken laws and privileges”, as well the “preservation” of her “Religion and Liberty”.⁸⁶ The terminology employed to describe the political actors is also instructive. At no point is it suggested that there is a conflict of interests between ‘England’ and the Dutch Republic, but rather with “the King of England”, who is sharply contrasted with “the People”, the discursive strategy being to differentiate England from her king. Also, it is worth noting that the *Declaration* was addressed to a European audience, “to all men”.⁸⁷

An obvious difficulty with interpreting the *Declaration* in a Dutch context is that it was solely concerned with affairs in England and Scotland. However, as has been sketched above, PwA 2243 shows that the justification of the invasion for a Dutch and international audience was very much in the minds of the authors. But even in the published *Declaration* we find clues about the intended readership in the Dutch Republic.⁸⁸ In one section William refers to the combined English and French invasion of the Netherlands in 1672: “since also the English did in the year 1672, when the States Generall of the *United Provinces* were Invaded in a most unjust warre”.⁸⁹ The point being made is that the English nation back then was also pro-Dutch and the war was fought

⁸⁵ *The Declaration of His Highness William Henry*, Knuttel 12773.

⁸⁶ *Resolutie*, Knuttel 12785, 5.

⁸⁷ Cf. A16-IXa-15 with Knuttel 12773.

⁸⁸ But see L. Jardine, *Going Dutch. How England Plundered Holland’s Glory* (New York, 2008).

⁸⁹ *The Declaration of His Highness William Henry*, Knuttel 12773, 7.

against their will by “those who were then in the government”.⁹⁰ Clearly, the English public is warned against the situation, for again there are some in the English government who seem to plan a war against the Dutch Republic. The warning is also clearly addressed to the French king. There have been suggestions that in 1688 France and England were joined together.⁹¹ This section obviously also made the point to a Dutch audience that this invasion was necessary to preclude a repetition of the 1672 disaster. The *Resolution* of the States General of 28 October used the same arguments and starts with the same premises as the *Declaration*, namely that the Prince of Orange has decided to intervene in English politics because of the situation in that country. Midway the *Resolution* changes perspective, and emphasis is laid on the close alliance between the Kings of France and England to subvert religion and liberty in England as well as in the Dutch Republic. The past was referred to when it was argued that France had been hostile to the Dutch in many past instances.⁹²

If, then, the *Declaration* in its final form has lost most of the just war allusions and Dutch perspective presented in PwA 2243, these figure largely in the accompanying publications of the States General. The framing of the invasion in a 1672 context is obvious in the declaration of war the Dutch issued on 9 March 1689, which has received little to no attention from historians.⁹³ It was a response to the French declaration of November 1688. The Dutch referred to the “injust war” of the French in 1672, and argued they would now “protect the Reformed religion, Liberty and the Fatherland, against unjust violence”.⁹⁴ The framing of 1688 in the context of 1672 began to loom largely as well in the deliberations of the deputies in the States of Holland.⁹⁵

Pamphlets transforming the political reality

However, it was not at all clear that 1688 would turn out to be a repetition of 1672. After all, the French armies were marching into the

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid., 4.

⁹³ *Declaratie van Oorlogh* (1689), Knuttel 13091.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 4.

⁹⁵ According to the Amsterdam deputies, on 26 October Caspar Fagel made a clear connection with the events of 1672. Stadsarchief Amsterdam, Archief burgemeesters, inv. no. 90, Deputies to the Amsterdam burgomasters 26 October 1688.

Palatinate rather than to the Dutch Republic. Nevertheless, the framing of the invasion in a 1672 context, which was needed to defend the invasion as inherently defensive, necessitated this interpretation of the situation. As such, the publications of the States General changed the political reality, in which the French threat was more or less constructed in order to justify political actions, which is not to say that William was being disingenuous, for the threat was perceived as very real, as clearly follows from his correspondence.⁹⁶ However, there was no alliance between France and England, so why would the Dutch believe there was? Naturally the Dutch suspected secret dealings between James II and Louis XIV. The Dutch ambassador in London, Arnout van Citters, had indicated that there had been discussions, and that the French ambassador Barillon had offered to James II naval and military assistance.⁹⁷ But whether James had accepted such assistance was unclear. Moreover, Citters doubted whether James was in a position to wage war against the Republic.⁹⁸ There was, however, suspicion that he might be able and willing to do so in the spring of 1689.⁹⁹ This information is of crucial importance, because it puts in doubt the view often endorsed by Dutch historians that William's daring overseas expedition and intervention in England were committed out of despair; whereas in fact it might very well be argued that it constituted a pre-emptive, or even preventive, strike.

Whilst the Dutch were still trying to figure out whether James was a threat at all, the French ambassador in The Hague, Comte d'Avaux, perceptive as always, took the initiative. Suspicious of an undertaking by the States to intervene in England, he handed over a memorial to the States General on 7 September.¹⁰⁰ He warned them to refrain from intervention, stating that James and Louis had a very good understanding and that any intervention in England would be construed by France as an act of war.¹⁰¹ Unwittingly d'Avaux forced the States General into

⁹⁶ E.g. William to Bentinck 4 September 1688, *Correspondentie*, ed., Japikse, vol. 23, 55.

⁹⁷ NUL PwA 2165, anonymous letter 9 June 1688 OS; BL Add Mss 17677 UUU, f° 569, dispatch Arnout van Citters 15 June 1688.

⁹⁸ NUL PwA 2159, anonymous letter 4 April 1688 OS; BL, Add Mss 17677 UUU, f° 539v°, Citters to States General 9 April 1688.

⁹⁹ NUL, PwA 2110, f° 2, Letter to 'Honoured Sir' 8 December 1687 OS.

¹⁰⁰ Resolution of 18 September 1688, *Secreete Resolutien*, vol. 5 224–226; See on the matter of the memorials Wagenaar, *Vaderlandsche historie*, vol. 15, 338ff. Cf. Van der Kuijl, *De glorieuze overtocht*, 21.

¹⁰¹ Resolution of 18 September 1688, *Secreete Resolutien* vol. 5, 224–226.

action, rather than passivity, since he had now openly confirmed what was suspected, namely that there was an understanding between the King of France and the King of England. This was also understood in this fashion by the Amsterdam burgomasters, who were far less convinced than William that war was impending. In a meeting of the *Groot Besogne* in Amsterdam on 26 September, at which all four burgomasters (Appelman, Hudde, Castricum and Boreel) as well as the pensionary (Bors van Waveren) were present, Hudde noted the intent of France and England to attack: "they only wait for a good opportunity". This intent had become clear from D'Avaux's memorial: "it follows from what they have done, and said".¹⁰² By now it was also clear that the Amsterdammers, traditionally the staunchest opponents of William's policy, were pushed into his camp. Considering the dangers from France and England, Hudde was caught in a "great perplexity" as to which decision to take,

But considering the unanimity not only of the gentlemen of the [committee for foreign affairs] in The Hague, but also their zeal to support His Highness with all the power of the land; as well as the inclination of the general people and the preachers which seems very clear, I would argue that it were better to give in to His Highnesses demands, rather than not.¹⁰³

It is striking to see how public opinion directly pressurised decisions on foreign policy.

D'Avaux's claim was interpreted as if a second treaty of Dover had been concluded. In fact, the English ambassador immediately understood the significance of d'Avaux's tactics, and frantically tried to explain to the Dutch authorities that England had nothing to do with d'Avaux's dealings, that James was unaware of any alliance with France and distanced himself from Louis's threats.¹⁰⁴ On 14 September the States General declared to d'Albeville that they had no intention to wage war with "the king and his people", which was, however, only a covert way of saying that they had no quarrel with his people but might

¹⁰² Hudde notes in J.F. Gebhard, *Het Leven van Mr. Nicolaas Cornelisz. Witsen (1641–1717)* 2 vols (Utrecht, 1882), vol. 2, 173.

¹⁰³ Private notes of Burgomaster Hudde, in Gebhard, *Het Leven van Mr. Nicolaas Cornelisz. Witsen*, 173.

¹⁰⁴ BL Add MSS 41816, d'Albeville? to Middleton 14 September, 17 September 1688 OS.

confront the King.¹⁰⁵ Only days later Petit wrote to Secretary of State Middleton that William's *Declaration* was expected soon.¹⁰⁶

Grand Pensionary Fagel had a conversation with d'Albeville on 23 September. In the meeting Fagel explained that d'Avaux's memorial had opened the eyes of the States General, that they had never believed that France would issue such a declaration, but that the Dutch now understood there was indeed a close connection between James II and Louis XIV.¹⁰⁷ D'Albeville's attempts to salvage the situation were futile. D'Avaux had handed the Dutch an official reason for the invasion of England, but it is good to emphasise that the Dutch decision was not simply based upon a pretext. According to his speech to the States of Holland on 26 October, William had no doubt whatsoever that during his absence the Republic would be attacked.¹⁰⁸ On 14 October the States informed d'Albeville that they were unwilling to respond to their claims until their own ambassador in London, Citters, had assured them there was no alliance between France and England.¹⁰⁹ Now that d'Avaux had revealed the threat, the cautious magistrates of Amsterdam could only condone the captain-general's precautions, although they loathed the "exaggerated" response of the pro-Orangist nobility which publicly thanked William "from the bottom of their souls".¹¹⁰

Convinced of the reality of the French threat, the Dutch had to be careful not to let their plans for the invasion be known, and Fagel continued to play a disingenuous word game. He declared that whatever Citters had said in London was not so much by order of the States but from himself.¹¹¹ Fagel, d'Albeville wrote, moreover ridiculed the thought that Holland could invade such a powerful state as England.¹¹² On 16 October, the States acknowledged that they were now convinced there was, after all, no alliance between France and England, but emphasised that their bewilderment had been caused by d'Avaux's

¹⁰⁵ Wagenaar, *Vaderlandsche historie*, vol. 15, 442.

¹⁰⁶ BL Add MSS 41816, Petit to Middleton 17 September 1688 OS.

¹⁰⁷ BL Add MSS 41816, d'Albeville? to Middleton, 14 September 1688 OS.

¹⁰⁸ *Redenen van Afscheyt*, Knuttel 12783.

¹⁰⁹ BL Add MSS 41816, d'Albeville? to Middleton 4 October 1688 OS.

¹¹⁰ Stadsarchief Amsterdam, Archief burgemeesters, inv. no. 89, Missiven van de gedeputeerden ter dagvaart aan de burgemeesters, entry 15 September 1688.

¹¹¹ BL Add MSS 41816, f° 205, d'Albeville? to Middleton 30 September 1688, OS.

¹¹² BL Add MSS 41816, f° 205, d'Albeville? to Middleton 30 September 1688, OS. Cf. 12756A.

original memorial.¹¹³ On 16 October the States adamantly declared to d'Albeville that they had nothing to do with whatever the Prince of Orange was up to.¹¹⁴ Nevertheless, the Resolution of 28 October was primarily based on the contention that there was an alliance between England and France, "as has been frequently assured to their High Mighties".¹¹⁵ Hence, D'Avaux's memorial substantially influenced events and must be considered one of the pivotal documents of 1688.

What is often ignored by historians is that d'Avaux also presented a second memorial on 9 September, warning the Dutch not to intervene in Cologne, where a dispute had arisen over the succession. Egon von Fürstenberg was the claimant backed by France and (therefore) opposed by the Dutch Republic, Brandenburg and the Emperor.¹¹⁶ This memorial was published and commented on in a pamphlet.¹¹⁷ Both the contents of the two memorials and the fact that they were handed in at the same time created a new reality. For not only were France and the Dutch Republic now fully engaged in a 'cold war' via the internal affairs of two neighbouring states, the affairs were now also connected in a way that reminded the Dutch very much of the situation of 1672, the conjunction of England, France and Munster. Handing in the two memorials at the same time, d'Avaux had created a European framework for events. As it was, France would declare war on the Dutch Republic on 26 November 1688, only days after the news had arrived in Versailles that William had safely landed his army in England. However, the declaration of war was based solely on the Dutch intervention in the affairs of Cologne; the Dutch invasion of England was not even mentioned.¹¹⁸ The reply of the States General, however, specifically referred to both memorials of d'Avaux and ridiculed the French king for warning the Dutch not to invade England when no such design had been certain at the time.¹¹⁹ Significantly, the *Hollandsche Mercurius* of 1688 (deliberately?) printed the French declaration of war

¹¹³ BL Add MSS 41816, d'Albeville? to Middleton 6 October 1688 OS.

¹¹⁴ BL Add MSS 41816, p. 243, d'Albeville? to Middleton, 16 October 1688 OS.

¹¹⁵ *Resolutie*, Knuttel 12785, 4.

¹¹⁶ Resolution of 18 September 1688, *Secreete Resolutien* vol. 5, 224–226.

¹¹⁷ *Aenmerckingen op d'Aenspraecke en de Memorie van den Heere Grave D'Avaux* (...) (1688) Knuttel 12756a.

¹¹⁸ The French declaration of war of 1688 is printed as a pamphlet without title. See Knuttel 12717.

¹¹⁹ *Korte aanmerckingen op de declaratie van oorlogh* ... (1688) Knuttel 12718.

of 26 November before discussing and printing the Prince's *Declaration*, the reversed chronological order suggesting a causal connection.¹²⁰

Policies were therefore shaped and reshaped in a continuously shifting discourse, which also baffled foreign observers. Whereas both the Spanish and the Imperialists were pleased with William's professions of respect towards the Catholicism in England, the "Emperor, by way of discourse, gave the Spanish ambassador [in Vienna] into consideration what to do should [William] wish to dethrone the King and banish the Catholic Religion".¹²¹ Although both the Emperor and the Spanish ambassador were convinced of William's goodwill, such "discourse" was not idle, for, according to Hop, it could boost the efforts of the pro-French 'Jesuit' faction at the Vienna court.¹²² Hop stressed how much the "groaning German Empire" would love to have England as a counter to France; in this light, one can easily understand how eagerly William wished to impress upon the Emperor his design to do just that.¹²³ Despite the Emperor's misgivings about the fate of Catholicism, the threat of an Anglo-French entente forced him into the Dutch camp.¹²⁴ The framing of the *Declaration* in solely defensive terms where it related to Protestantism ultimately must have pacified both the Emperor and the King of Spain.

Revolution in Foreign Policy

It was, then, in the course of this debate that new legitimisations were developed. For instance, Gaspar Fagel had argued "that the registers of the year 1672 have clearly shown that the time of God's church after some time after have been very sorrowful; and that it was meant to extirpate us once and for all".¹²⁵ The constructed connection between

¹²⁰ *Hollandsche Mercurius, Verhalende de voornaemste saken van Staet en andere voorvallen die in en omtrent de Vereenigde Nederlanden en elders in Europa in het jaer 1688 zijn geschiet* (Haarlem, 1689), 196–198.

¹²¹ Hop to William III 11 November 1688, *Weense gezantschapsberichten van 1670–1720*, ed. G. Antal and J.C.H. Pater (The Hague, 1929–1934), 393.

¹²² Hop to William III 11 November 1688, *Weense gezantschapsberichten*, ed. Antal and Pater.

¹²³ Hop to William III 11 November 1688, *ibid.*, 394.

¹²⁴ Hop to the States General Greffier, 12 December 1688, *ibid.*, 402.

¹²⁵ Stadsarchief Amsterdam, Archief burgemeesters, inv. no. 90, Deputies to the Amsterdam burgomasters 26 October 1688.

the French invasion of 1672 and the situation in 1688, and the continuous threat to Protestantism, resulted in a new discourse in which interest of state and religion merged seamlessly. But the discourse transmuted further in that it acquired an international character. Unlike 1672, it was not just the Dutch church that was threatened, but European Protestantism. Dutch foreign policy discourse in 1688, then, developed a much more confessional as well as international language than in 1672. Central in this discourse was the position of the Prince of Orange and his constructed past.

Illustrative for this discursive shift is the visual language employed by the Prince. The coat of arms of the Prince printed prominently on the cover of one of the versions of the *Declaration*¹²⁶ has not received much attention, but arguably William's dynastic and religious claims are cleverly conveyed in the heraldic language as well. The escutcheon consists of four parts, the two quarters on the right underlining William's Stuart ancestry: The golden lions or leopards and the *fleurs-des-lys* of the English royal house, combined with the harp of the Kingdom of Ireland and the golden lion of the kingdom of Scotland. On the left side William's other possessions are on display, which should be noted were not primarily Dutch: In the main shield the coats of arms of Nassau (golden lion), Katzenelnbogen (red lion), Vianden (three bars) and Dietz (golden lions), all of which were German possessions except Vianden (Luxembourg). The small shield in the centre represents the possessions in France: Chalon (a red field with a golden bar) and Orange (an azure horn on a golden field). In the centre of the heart shield is a smaller field of azure and gold, representing the Prince's possessions in Switzerland (county of Geneva). Above and below the heart shield are two smaller shields representing his possessions in the Dutch Republic, Borssele and Buren. William therefore clearly presented himself as a transnational sovereign with a European-wide interest.

Supporting the coat of arms is the crowned lion (symbolising England) on the left and the crowned unicorn (symbolising Scotland) on the right. The lower scroll, however, shows the Orange motto "*Je maintiendray*" ("I will maintain"), first used in the Nassau family by the first Prince of Orange, William the Silent.¹²⁷ To the Dutch the motto

¹²⁶ *The Declaration of His Highness William Henry*, Knuttel 12773, see figure 1.

¹²⁷ Until 1544 the motto was used by the Chalon family.



Figure 1. William's coat of arms with motto and slogan. Source Knuttel 12773

was inextricably linked with the Dutch Revolt and the struggle against Spanish Catholic tyranny. The prominence of the motto is remarkable. The upper scroll text, "Prot. Religion and Liberty", shows the slogan of the invasion, and also refers to the European-wide struggle against Catholicism. By juxtaposing the motto and the slogan in this manner, William reinvented himself as a hero for European Protestantism and visually linked the classic wars of religion to the invasion in England.

Chronology is important. The concern for European Protestantism was first officially noted in the special declaration for the English sailors (also incorporated in the *Declaration* as an addendum). It seems to have been written on 29 September, well before the *Declaration* itself. English sailors and captains were called upon to assist William, for "The totall ruine of your Religion being as much designed by the Papists in England, as it is already accomplished in France".¹²⁸ The linkage to France must have been consciously designed, for only four days earlier, on 25 September, France had invaded the Palatinate, and the news must have just come in.

¹²⁸ *The Declaration of His Highness William Henry*, Knuttel 12773, 15.

Publishing Pamphlets as a Performative Act

Not only the contents but also the very act of publishing a statement, such as the *Declaration* or d'Avaux's memorial, must be considered a political act with profound implications. By publishing the *Declaration* the Prince of Orange solidified his domestic political position. The influence of the Prince of Orange in matters of foreign policy had been generally acknowledged since his coming to power in 1672, yet it was never uncontroversial. Publishing the *Declaration* was important because it also evoked the memory of his illustrious forefather, the first Prince of Orange, William I 'the Silent', who had issued his own illustrious 'declaration of reasons', the *Apology* of 1581, in reply to the ban of Philip II, which, incidentally, may have been written by Duplessis-Mornay. The comparison between the two documents is suggestive, since the situation was very different and the highly emotional and fiery prose of William I had little in common with the balanced rational legal language of Gaspar Fagel. But on a higher level the similarities are striking. Firstly, both William I and William III claimed the right to conduct a foreign policy based on the fact that they were sovereign Princes of Orange, a right they, as stadtholders, had to yield to the States General. In the process they claimed a predominant position in Dutch politics. Moreover, William III the Dutchman clearly refashioned himself as a European statesman, transcending nationality. This is related to the second point: Both princes claimed to protect a foreign people¹²⁹ from the oppression of a tyrannical monarch. In the process they justified their actions by means of a political ideology that espoused religion and liberty. Consciously or not, William exploited the Orange myth to his full advantage. By issuing the *Declaration*, he rose above politics and presented himself as an international charismatic leader with a mythical aura. He became an international hero of Protestantism. The comparison was explicitly made by contemporaries. The *Hollandsche Mercurius* (a yearly account of political events) of 1688 opens precisely with this view, as if to provide a framework of meaning for the 1688 events:

Over a century ago, Prince William I of Orange [became the] architect of the Dutch salvation from Granvelle's spiritual and Alba's secular slavery

¹²⁹ Although William the Silent had possessions in the Netherlands, he was of German descent.

and of her freedom ... [now] Britain welcomes with open arms and no less glad Prince William III, treading in the footsteps of his noble ancestor ...¹³⁰

Thirdly, the issuing of the *Declaration* was also a political performative act for by it William claimed to be an international arbiter, and it also considerably strengthened his domestic position. The very order of events was also of particular significance. William's finishing of the *Declaration* on 10 October was followed in 28 October by the resolution of the States General, in which they confirmed the *Declaration* and vowed to support William. William himself confirmed the *Declaration* and promised the States General he would do nothing except as promised in his *Declaration*.¹³¹ Indeed, the Polish ambassador Antoine Moreau perceptively observed how the very issuing of the *Declaration* followed by the *Resolution* completely altered the position of the Prince of Orange. Not only, Moreau wrote to his master King John III Sobieski, had the power of Orange considerably grown, against the idea of those who would have thought that his power would decline. "The contents of the Resolution", Moreau, wrote, "show Your Majesty the credit and the authority of the Prince of Orange in that Republic".¹³²

Moreover, Moreau concluded that the issuing of the Resolution implied glory for the Prince of Orange, "and a much greater reputation in all the courts of Europe".¹³³ In despair, d'Albeville exclaimed on 20 October "how absolutlij the Prince is Master of these States".¹³⁴ An important reason was that William had been making military preparations in utter secret without informing the States assembly, claiming secrecy was necessary at this conjuncture. It greatly strengthened his position, as captain-general of the Dutch army. Abroad as well William's claim as pretender to the throne of England was noted. James's defenders complained about the royal plural used in the *Declaration*: "to use in England the style of We and Us, commanding, having of Parliaments and settling the nations ... can declare nothing else to us but that his design is to be King".¹³⁵ But it should be considered first how William's

¹³⁰ *Hollandsche Mercurius, behelsende het Gedenckweerdigste in Christenrijck voorgevallen, binnen 't gansche Jaar 1688* (Haarlem, 1689), 1.

¹³¹ *Bishop Burnet's History*, 496.

¹³² BL Add MSS 38493, f° 45 r°, Moreau to King of Poland, 2 November 1688.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ BL Add MSS 41816, f° 228, d'Albeville to Middleton.

¹³⁵ Quoted in Israel, "Propaganda", 171.

use of the plural emphasised his position within the Dutch Republic as well. In the first draft, by Gaspar Fagel, the second *Declaration* starts with the phrase "We William Henry, by the grace of God Prince of Orange and Nassau".¹³⁶ In the final version, drastically redrafted by Burnet, this phrase has disappeared, although the plural is maintained in the first sentence.¹³⁷ It does, however, show the emphasis the Dutch Orangists wished to place on the position of William as a sovereign prince.

Conclusion

To conclude, it has been established that to deem Williamite propaganda as deceptive is unhelpful, because the similarities with the private correspondence in Williamite circles are remarkable. More importantly, the publications issued by William and the States were not meant to mislead the readers, but rather to create a meaningful framework to interpret recent events, formulate and justify political action. This framework was not the straightforward result of disingenuous propaganda, nor of a realistic interpretation of the situation. Rather, it was the product of perceptions that were shaped and reshaped in a debate and the search for a new foreign policy which was developing over the summer and autumn of 1688.

During the summer of 1688, Dutch policymakers were uncertain as to which policy to adopt, since a radically new situation was developing. In the process of their deliberations, a revolution in foreign policy was staged. Although the status of PwA 2243 is unknown, it is likely that it was considered a serious policy document and could be regarded as a precursor to the *Declaration*. The attempt of PwA 2243 to cast the essentially hostile act of invasion in strong terms of religious and strategic necessity was clear indication that the Dutch were anxious about the justice of their actions. However, the original claims of a just war for the Protestant religion were toned down considerably in the final draft, where the emphasis was fully on England's domestic affairs. At the same time, just war rhetoric resurfaced in the accompanying *Reasons for Leaving* and the *Resolution* of the States General,

¹³⁶ *Correspondentie*, ed. Japikse, vol. 24, 620.

¹³⁷ "His Highnesses Additional Declaration," in *The Declaration of His Highness*, Knuttel 12773.

which focused primarily on the alleged alliance between the Kings of England and France, making it possible to construe the invasion as inherently defensive. The Dutch had been uncertain about the status of Anglo-French relations, but ultimately believed in an alliance because of d'Avaux's published memorial. Moreover, D'Avaux also constructed a European framework by connecting the fates of England and Cologne. In the process, Dutch foreign policy transformed through the mutation of traditional national 'religion and liberty' discourse into a European ideology. The performative act of publishing the *Declaration* must be considered a masterstroke of the Prince, who, like William the Silent, issued a document in which he rose to become a hero of European Protestantism and which strengthened his domestic position. In the process, a revolution in Dutch foreign policy, from inherently defensive to offensive, was established.

This article set out to investigate how foreign policy discourse developed in 1688. The purpose has been to apply Lois Schwoerer's claim that '(...) the *Declaration* shaped past events and present policies' to the Dutch Republic. It has aimed to show how a political document such as the *Declaration* may be a historical actor in its own right, which not only reshaped the political reality, but was itself an essential part of it. The publication of d'Avaux's memorial and the three Dutch documents did shape a new reality, in which the fortunes of France, England and the Dutch Republic were inextricably linked, and with which consecutive foreign policy discourses needed to engage.

ECONOMIC REFORM AND NEUTRALITY IN DUTCH POLITICAL PAMPHLETS, 1741–1779

Koen Stapelbroek

Introduction

How may pamphlets be used to better understand later eighteenth-century Dutch politics? The aim of this article is to provide a window onto a series of pamphlet debates to show how they may be used as sources for ‘rolling back’, from 1779 to 1741, a series of interconnected debates that accompanied the unfolding of a political process that led to the outbreak of the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War. On the one hand, pamphlets are used to develop a closer understanding of these debates. On the other, the role of pamphlets themselves, not simply as access points, but fulfilling a function in shaping these debates will become apparent.

When Britain declared war on the Dutch Republic in 1780, and previously when it was speculated that another Anglo-Dutch conflict might break out in 1778 and 1779, the situation of the Dutch Republic was widely understood across Europe to signify the final collapse of a national system of trade-based politics that was out of place in the modern world. The famous depictions by writers such as Montesquieu of trade republics as belonging to an interstate configuration that was now relegated to the past, and the explanations by David Hume of the reasons why modern politics had crushed these entities, simultaneously reflected a broad awareness of the problems of the eighteenth-century interstate system as resulting from the curious history of commerce and modern government in Europe since the fall of the Roman Empire.¹ In many ways the ideas that dominated eighteenth-century international discussions about the fate of the Dutch Republic

¹ C. de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, ed. A.M. Cohler, B.C. Miller and H.S. Stone (Cambridge, 1989), 337–397; D. Hume, *Political Essays*, ed. K. Haakonssen (Cambridge, 1989), 51–57, 93–104 (The essays “Of Civil liberty” and “Of commerce”, which provide a general historical-political framework for the immediately following essays on political economy).

echoed the famous judgement pronounced in 1673 by the English ambassador William Temple. In 1672 the Republic was attacked from all sides by its neighbours. Temple's verdict was that since trade in recent years had turned from a business engaged in by territory-deprived republican city states into an object of direct political competition between Europe's dominant nations, the shelf life of the Dutch Republic had come to an end.² Yet, whereas Temple predicted or even observed a complete downfall and near loss of independence,³ what followed, in the aftermath of the peace settlement of 1674, was nothing sudden, but a protracted process of decline that served as a seedbed for popular debate in which Dutch thinkers discussed the past, present and future of their state's identity and its viability.

The Dutch Republic did not cease to exist in 1673 as a result of the 'Revolution'⁴ that Temple saw in front of him when the last of the world's trade republics was brutally deprived of its dominant role in European politics, but only in 1795, with the establishment of the French-supported Batavian Republic. Whether Temple was wrong in his judgement in 1673 or whether the prospect of the enduring existence of the Dutch Republic simply lay outside the rhetorical design of his *Observations* with its English audience and its domestic polemical preoccupations is not an issue here. The fact was that after 1673 space was left for the Dutch Republic to rise to the challenge of countering the threat of loss of independence by initiating adequate reforms and alliance arrangements. What happened between 1673 and 1780, between the end of the Third and the beginning of the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War, has been discussed from a number of historical sub-disciplinary angles (by, for instance, diplomatic, military and economic historians) but still it is difficult to see how the events and political debates of this period gave rise to the *Patriottentijd* (Patriot period). This period, normally seen as spanning from 1776 to 1787, classically, was compared by the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century nationalistic historian H.T. Colenbrander to a puppet theatre play.⁵ Behind the

² W. Temple, *Observations upon the United Provinces of the Netherlands* (London, 1673), 108–126. On Temple's analysis of the Dutch situated in a wider context of political economy see I. Hont, *Jealousy of Trade. International Competition and the Nation-State in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge Ma., 2005), 185–201.

³ Temple, *Observations upon the United Provinces*, i–ii.

⁴ *Ibid.*, ii.

⁵ H.T. Colenbrander, *De Patriottentijd. Hoofdzakelijk naar Buitenlandsche Bescheiden*, 3 vols (The Hague, 1897), vol. 1, vii–ix.

scenes French and English diplomatic powers disputed control over the strings that connected to the process of Dutch self-destruction.

What is most remarkable about this depiction is not the provocative image itself. The portrayal of a foreign struggle for control over Dutch affairs was pre-empted by titles of Dutch works since at least the 1730s – if not the previous century – such as J.T. La Fargue's *Mirror-of-state for the Netherlands, against foreign trickery and false representations of the time* (*Staats-spiegel voor den Nederlander, tegen uitheemsse kunstnaryen en verkeerde bevattingen des tyds*).⁶ Also, the dressing up in burgher militia uniforms, famously, was ridiculed by contemporaries, and it must have been too tempting for Colenbrander not to include it into his account of the period. Still, Colenbrander will have realised that in so doing his account moved from an analysis of underlying patterns to the surface of popular sentiment and accordingly presented his depiction of a sudden genre shift, from serious political debate to comedy theatre, with a huge dose of tongue-in-cheek.

Here, a useful pointer is provided by Piet Blaas, who has pointed out that, never mind the eye-catching image of the puppet show, Colenbrander's real aim was to establish the *Patriottentijd* as an 'epilogue' to a history of failed state-building.⁷ Throughout the eighteenth century, despite external and internal pressures that necessitated reform, there were, in Colenbrander's view, no serious attempts at constitutional improvement, there was no 'Enlightenment', and hence the contrast with the 1795 overturning of the Republic and the following

⁶ Published in 1744 in The Hague. More on La Fargue later in this essay. In the 1780s the portrayals would change character, roughly to coincide with Colenbrander's imagery. For example, the 1786/7 republication (which Knuttel mistakenly numbered 18567 suggesting a much earlier publication date) of Pieter Le Clercq's *Het Karakter van den R.P. J. De Witt*, which in 1757 triggered the 'Wittenoerlog' – more on which follows below – bore the title *Bewys van de intrigues van vreemde ministers, om invloed op de zaak van de Republiek te bekoemen*. (The indications 'Knuttel #', also hereinafter, refer to the pamphlet collection of the Royal Dutch Library in The Hague, which was catalogued by W.P.C. Knuttel; when sets of Knuttel numbers are given they serve as a rough indication of the size of the debate, since the Knuttel collection does not contain all the pamphlets that were in fact published. It may also be useful to note, against any tendency to isolate pamphlets as historical sources, that the content of pamphlet debates can often not quite be fully understood without considering other sources, such as political treatises and policy advice memoranda).

⁷ P.B.M. Blaas, "De patriottenbeweging als epiloog. Rond Colenbrander's *Patriottentijd*," in *Geschiedenis en nostalgie*, ed. P.M.N. Blaas (Hilversum, 2000), 82–98. On page 83, Blaas reminds his readers that Colenbrander and Japikse, as the last pupils of Fruin, operated in accordance with the fashion of the period in stressing the primacy of foreign politics in their development of a national history.

rebuilding of the state could only be judged favourably. Put in this perspective, the opening chapters of the first instalment of Colenbrander's three volume work provide a specification of the end of Robert Fruin's schematic "tweede tijdvak" (second epoch) within Dutch history. Grounded on an analysis of national history revolving around factions, an enduring constitutional problem, and the failure to set up necessary reforms these chapters lead up to a, by Colenbrander's own admission, possibly slightly stylised (due to selective source use)⁸ story of how the diplomatic and foreign political conditions of the time closed in on the Dutch Republic.

The really remarkable thing about Colenbrander's work is the extent to which its late nineteenth-century 'epilogue' reading of the role of the years around 1787 in Dutch history set the agenda for later historians of the Dutch eighteenth century. Until this day, studies of later eighteenth-century Dutch politics align themselves (whether critically or not and whether consciously or not) with Colenbrander's outlook on the reform problem of the Dutch Republic and his political theoretical understanding. In general, one might argue that the legacy of Colenbrander, and the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century breed of historians he was part of, has consistently and until this day been a lot more influential than is commonly acknowledged. Where Blaas signalled Colenbrander coming back into fashion,⁹ one might equally observe that Colenbrander's narrative since the appearance of his *Patriottentijd* has influenced enormously the interpretation of historical sources of the period.

This is not to say that Colenbrander's specific judgements have remained unchallenged or that no useful complements and amendments were made to supplement his views. Quite the contrary, Dutch historiography has consistently produced valuable pieces of research to these effects.¹⁰ What then is the problem with the canonicity of Colenbrander's state-building oriented narrative and the fact that

⁸ Colenbrander, *Patriottentijd*, vol. 1, x.

⁹ Blaas, "De patriottenbeweging als epiloog", 97–98.

¹⁰ Ibid., 84–97, contains a reception history (and pre-history) of Colenbrander's work. The legacy of Colenbrander's wider political outlook I hope to engage with in the course of a book-length study on the subject of this chapter. Interesting observations on this issue are made in a recent piece by W.W. Mijnhardt, "De drie tijdvakken van de Nederlandse geschiedenis," *Archief. Mededelingen van het Koninklijk Zeeuwsch Genootschap der Wetenschappen* (2006).

it has triggered little effort by historians to reconstruct in more analytical detail how the Patriot Movement actually arose?

The reason for opening up Colenbrander's perspective lies in the marginal space it allows for recognising the status of the eighteenth-century political economic reform debate. It is commonly supposed, and not without reason, that the Dutch were unable to come to grips with the international situation concerning trade in the eighteenth century and rise to the new challenges it posed.¹¹ Within Colenbrander's account of eighteenth-century Dutch politics this supposition translated, 1) into a restrictive focus on reform as essentially an institutional or constitutional issue and thereby, 2) imposed a late nineteenth-century retrospective caricature onto eighteenth-century debates. These inclinations may have fitted very well with the political and intellectual temperament of Colenbrander's age and academic education. However, there actually was, throughout the eighteenth century, a real and much wider debate, in which diagnoses of decline, possible scenarios for the future of global trade politics and rival economic reform strategies were played out against each other. To grant ourselves access to these debates, the stylised focus on eighteenth-century failed state-building in terms of a fall from grace since the seventeenth and a constitutional restoration in the nineteenth century is discarded.

The second half of the eighteenth century saw numerous waves of pamphlet debates raging through the Dutch Republic containing a variety of ideas about the changing dynamics between poor and rich, small and dominant states.¹² By looking at these debates in closer detail, the late nineteenth-century perspective on Dutch history may be revised with a historical approach that recognises the importance of these economic reform debates in which a plethora of reform visions were discussed. Eighteenth-century pamphlets, perhaps surprisingly, are a relatively neglected source for the study of Dutch politics on its

¹¹ Mostly the reasons are in a rather general sense associated with the Republic's political and institutional decentralisation and the resistance to reform displayed by interested parties at various levels. See, for a classical statement, Johannes Hovy, "Institutioneel onvermogen in de 18^e eeuw," in *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, ed. D.P. Blok et al., 15 vols (Haarlem, 1980), vol. 9, 126–138.

¹² Colenbrander did not look at the pamphlets published between 1776 and 1787 and certainly not before this period and so missed an important source for sensing the centrality of the reform debates about trade and neutrality and their status in relation to international and national political concerns about trade and its capacity to trigger war instead of be an agent of prosperity and peace.

own terms. This applies in particular to the period between 1741 and 1779, in which period the reference points in pamphlet debates to issues of trade and neutrality remained remarkably constant.¹³ Rather than primarily a tool of party or faction based political struggle, propaganda and influence, pamphlets, I want to suggest, ought to be recognised as a platform for the development of political theory. Moreover, by detaching pamphlet discussions from party interpretations, it may be possible to place the development of Dutch patriotism in a novel and richer context. Most of all, serious study of discussions, mainly in pamphlets, about the neutrality of trade and Dutch decline in the middle decades of the eighteenth century provide the possibility to better understand both the interest that political writers and diplomats of other states took in the fate of the Dutch Republic and the way in which the dynamic of the struggles within Dutch political life preceded the later development of European, and indeed American, debates and events. To see these connections, the notion of neutrality in particular, commonly seen as entailing no more than a customarily balancing and trading in of natural allies and enemies, requires substantial refinement.¹⁴ On the basis of these considerations, the study of mid-eighteenth-century Dutch pamphlets is expected to be fruitful in producing a more differentiated, less isolationist and non-retrospective understanding of Dutch political economy as feeding into wider European debates about commerce, neutrality and state reform that unfolded around the time of the French Revolution.

*A Piedmontese diplomat in The Hague: Montagnini's
dispatches to Perrone*

For a start, it is useful to acknowledge the way in which Dutch pamphlets were received in the Kingdom of Sardinia (mainly consisting of

¹³ Qua source-use the following therefore displays some familiarity with older studies by J. Hartog, *De Patriotten en Oranje van 1747–1787* (Amsterdam, 1882) and F.W. van Wijk, *De Republiek en Amerika. 1776 tot 1782* (Leiden, 1921), but neither resembles Hartog's curiously unhistorical judgement of the patriots as an originally well-intentioned, yet in the end deranged band of lawless rebels whose actions were caused by abusive regents and their exploitation of the constitution; nor van Wijk's perspective and temporal focus, which remain very close to Colenbrander's.

¹⁴ For the discourse of 'official' natural allies and enemies, see N.C.F. van Sas, "Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea. The Logic of Neutrality," in *Colonial Empires compared. Britain and the Netherlands 1750–1850*, ed. B. Moore and H. van Nierop (Aldershot, 2003).

Piedmont), where politicians took the Dutch situation as a paradigm case for understanding general shifts in interstate relations. In 1778 the newly appointed Piedmontese envoy, Count Carlo Ignazio Montagnini di Mirabello,¹⁵ received immediately upon his arrival a letter with instructions from the secretary for foreign affairs, the Count Perrone.¹⁶ In Turin, the events in 1778 and 1779 were followed with great attention and were believed to be decisive for the future of the Dutch Republic. In these years the French promised independent trade privileges to those Dutch cities that resisted complying with the British interpretation of commercial neutrality. As Perrone wrote to Montagnini: "you could not have arrived in the Republic at a time that was more important for the Dutch", since "it seems they might not manage to remain neutral like in the last war".¹⁷ Meanwhile Montagnini himself was instructed by the strongly anglophile Perrone to represent complete neutrality in all aspects related to the war.¹⁸ His main mission was to keep an eye on Dutch manoeuvres in the War of American Independence, as the Piedmontese were particularly adept in using foreign officials as sense organs for understanding shifts in international dynamics to guide their own actions.

In selecting their highest official in The Hague the Piedmontese, no doubt, were aware of the gravity of the position.¹⁹ The Hague, as is

¹⁵ About Montagnini, see L. Bulferetti, "Il principio della 'superiorità territoriale' nella memorialistica piemontese del secolo XVIII. Carlo Ignazio Montagnini di Mirabello," in *Studi in memoria di Gioele Solari*, ed. Felice Balbo et al. (Turin, 1954); D.E.D. Beales and T.J. Hochstrasser, "Un intellettuale piemontese a Vienna e un' inedita storia del pensiero politico (1766)," *Bollettino Storico-Bibliografico Subalpino* 91 (1993).

¹⁶ Perrone's activities and the functioning of the Piedmontese foreign service are sketched by D. Frigo, *Principe, ambasciatori e 'Jus gentium'. L'amministrazione della politica estera nel Piemonte del Settecento* (Rome, 1991). See also Christopher Storrs, "Savoyard Diplomacy in the Eighteenth Century (1684–1798)," in *Politics and Diplomacy in Early Modern Italy. The Structure of Diplomatic Practice, 1450–1800*, ed. D. Frigo (Cambridge, 2000) and on Perrone specifically, P. Dagna, "Un diplomatico ed economista del Settecento. Carlo Baldassare Perrone di San Martino (1718–1802)," in *Figure e gruppi della classe dirigente piemontese nel Risorgimento*, ed. Dagna et al. (Turin, 1968).

¹⁷ *Archivio di Stato di Torino* (hereafter AST), inv. no. 151, Lettere Ministri, Olanda, mazzo 71, (Perrone to Montagnini, Turin 28 March 1778 and 4 April 1778).

¹⁸ AST, inv. no. 151 Lettere Ministri, Olanda, mazzo 71 (Perrone to Montagnini, Turin 28 March 1778).

¹⁹ Beales and Hochstrasser, "Un intellettuale piemontese a Vienna": 273–5, suggest that Montagnini's activities in Vienna probably led to his being picked as the Piedmontese delegate to the Dutch Republic. Montagnini rose through the ranks of the Piedmontese civil service and was named to foreign ministerships thanks to his precise vision of how the Kingdom of Sardinia following the *renversement des alliances* could rely on a restored pro-Austrian and pro-British position in interstate affairs.

abundantly known, was not just a place where Dutch affairs were negotiated, but where European intrigues surfaced and where power balances and distributions were reorganised and restructured. There is then also no real contradiction between the fact that Montagnini was revered by the senior British diplomat Sir James Harris and other high-powered foreign officials,²⁰ but was neither regularly received by the Stadtholder, nor did he wield influence in Dutch politics.²¹ Montagnini was not interested in Dutch politics per se,²² nor was his most important task simply to feel the pulse of international affairs. From the letters and pieces by Montagnini sent to Turin a picture emerges of the Dutch Republic, and its neutral status, being taken as an exemplary case for shaping the strategy to be developed by the Kingdom of Sardinia in international affairs.

Montagnini's real importance resided in his function as an expatriate assistant of Perrone in the design of the Piedmontese political and economic strategy of carving out a niche for the Kingdom of Sardinia in international relations. From the first appearance of the Piedmontese on the international scene at the time of William III,²³ the Dutch Republic was an interesting model for the Piedmontese as a state similarly negotiating its place in a British-led diplomatic alliance. From the

²⁰ Beales and Hochstrasser, "Un intellettuale piemontese a Vienna": 272. See also J.J. Poelhekke, "De Sardische Gezantschapsberichten uit Den Haag 1784–1787," *Mededelingen van het Nederlands Historisch Instituut te Rome* 3:10 (1959): 273.

²¹ Poelhekke, "De Sardische Gezantschapsberichten": 274–276, judges Montagnini's activities as irrelevant largely because of this. P.J. Blok, *Verslag van Onderzoekingen naar Archivalia in Italië belangrijk voor de Geschiedenis van Nederland* (The Hague, 1901), 80–81, on the other hand, reinforces the idea that Montagnini, like his earlier eighteenth-century predecessors, was instructed to understand the inner mechanisms of Dutch political life, not out of any interest for the Dutch, but because the Piedmontese could use information about the predicament of the Dutch Republic in interstate affairs to evaluate the feasibility of their own reform trajectory.

²² However, Blok, *Archivalia in Italië*, 83, notes that the subsidiary payments involved in the Savoyard entrance into the Vienna alliance against France were an issue of direct interest. Cf. *Archivio di Stato di Venezia* (hereafter ASVe), Senato, dispaacci degli ambasciatori, l'Aia, filza 13, 21 May 1743 (letter VI), one of Andrea Tron's first dispatches to Venice where he mentions a long speech before the States General by the "Ministro di Sardegna" about the eternal friendship between the Dutch Republic and his country. Tron's dispatches, briefly discussed in P.J. Blok, *Relazioni Veneziane. Venezia'sche Berichten over de Vereenigde Nederlanden van 1600–1695* (The Hague, 1909), 381–385, forms a good comparative case for the way in which the Piedmontese saw the Dutch situation as somehow a useful benchmark for devising domestic reform projects.

²³ See Robert Oresko, "The Glorious Revolution of 1688–9 and the House of Savoy," in *The Anglo-Dutch Moment. Essays on the Glorious Revolution and its World Impact*, ed. J.I. Israel (Cambridge, 1991), 367.

1740s, after the War of the Polish Succession in which it joined the Bourbon powers, and in particular after the accession to power of Victor Amadeus III in 1773 and the rise of Perrone in 1777, Piedmont became consistently more oriented towards cultivating a pro-British policy in order to fend off French threats and simultaneously explore a strategy of commercial neutrality. In short, what Perrone aspired to seemed to have been the creation of a pro-English neutral commercial state with a wine export, two free ports and an internal colony – Sardinia – as a platform for generating the development of agricultural productivity as well as the revival of the once flourishing textile industry.²⁴

Although the dimensions of this project still require considerable research, the motivation behind it must, among other reasons, be associated with the establishment of new and the revival of older free ports in the old Italian states around 1750 and the Austrian-Tuscan-Lombard attempts to acquire a large share of the Mediterranean trade.²⁵ Whereas the internal side of the Piedmontese economic reform debates, based on studies of the circles of diplomatic elites, has been studied to some extent though without recognition of the actual context,²⁶ it is the external, international, side that has been ignored to a great extent. In the dispatches of Montagnini as a particular example we can recognise the Dutch predicament as forming an interesting model for Piedmontese state development.

Montagnini's ideas on international politics as modelling Perrone's vision shine through in his many unpublished works and policy memoranda – *pace* J.J. Poelhekke's overall assessment, based on knowledge of only a few works of Montagnini's, of his idea as "lifeless" and "plain".²⁷

²⁴ Storrs, "Savoyard Diplomacy in the Eighteenth Century", goes some way towards reconstructing this vision. For a wider (and longer) context see Enrico Genta, *Principe e regole internazionali tra forza e costume. Le relazioni anglo-sabaude nella prima metà del settecento* (Naples, 2004).

²⁵ In this respect the Venetian situation was similar and in the ASVe and in writings by Andrea Tron from the 1740s onwards a similar obsession with the consequences of the establishment of new free ports and the use of old free ports for new political purposes can be traced, which I hope to discuss in future work.

²⁶ See recent work by G. Monestarlo, *Negozianti e Imprenditori nel Piemonte d'Antico Regime. La cultura Economica di Ignazio Donaudi delle Mallere* (Florence, 2006) and his "The project of a commercial state. Ignazio Donaudi and the question of Piedmontese economic development (1773–1789)," *History of European Ideas* 32:4 (2006).

²⁷ Poelhekke, "De Sardische Gezantschapsberichten": 273–274. More complete lists of Montagnini's works are included in Bulferetti, "Il principio della 'superiorità territoriale'" and Beales and Hochstrasser, "Un intellettuale Piemontese a Vienna", who drew

Furthermore, Montagnini's letters to Perrone abound in observations about the ways in which the Dutch experienced the challenges of combining commercial neutrality with a friendly attachment to Britain.²⁸ In particular, Perrone's dispatches represent what may, without reverting to a party interpretation, be termed the Anglophile or Orangist side in the debate.²⁹ We find for example, among the papers sent by Montagnini, an anonymous (and hitherto unidentified) manuscript by Isaac de Pinto in which the Anglo-Dutch vision for the future of global trade politics is explained with ramifications for present politics.³⁰ This piece appears to have been the main inspiration for a document put together in 1779 by the Archiviste Ambel, on the relations between the Dutch Republic and Britain, of which a number of complete and unused copies are still extant. This piece appears to have been written for a Turinese audience to discuss the character of pro-British commercial neutrality.³¹ In another location there are texts about the law of neutrality with frequent references to technical details within Anglo-Dutch controversies during the Seven Years' War and

on an unpublished thesis by G.C. Greppi completed at the University of Turin in 1960–1961 that unfortunately I was unable to get hold of despite the kind assistance of the staff at the biblioteca Solari.

²⁸ AST, inv. no. 151, Lettere Ministri, Olanda, mazzo 71. Montagnini gives a lot of detail on the issues of armed convoy and the role of Haarlem (and the offer of French trade privileges) in his notes on the 1778 discussions on neutrality.

²⁹ AST, inv. no. 151, Lettere Ministri, Olanda, mazzo 71. Montagnini's beacon in making sense of the situation appears to have been Fagel, whose frank explanations to Montagnini about the difficulties of publicly and legally justifying the Dutch course of action ended up directly in the dispatches to Turin. Were Fagel and Rendorp really, as Poelhekke, "De Sardische Gezantschapsberichten": 275, suggests, such poor sources for gauging Dutch political life?

³⁰ AST, inv. no. 100, 2a addizione, Olanda, mazzo 4 addizione, fascicolo 2. The manuscript is dated 1779. A manuscript of what appears to be an earlier – rougher and unpolished – version of the same text can be found in the Dutch Koninklijke Bibliotheek in its van Goens Collectie (KB, classmark 130 D3/ J, entitled "Examen impartial des intérêts actuels de la République par rapport à une alliance"), where it is dated 1783, attributed to Pinto and combined with a text by Rijklof Michael van Goens. See also I. Nijenhuis, *Een Joodse Filosoof. Isaac de Pinto (1717–1787)* (Amsterdam, 1992), 31, 43, who mentions this work. Interestingly, the AST owns more manuscripts that run parallel to the holdings of the KB van Goens collection, for instance: AST, inv. no. 100, 2a addizione Olanda, mazzo 1 addizione, fascicolo 46, contains a manuscript, from 1778, entitled "Examen des Plaintes des Négociants d'Amsterdam", that strongly resembles KB, van Goens Collectie, 130 D3/ G12.

³¹ AST, inv. no. 100, 2a addizione, Olanda, mazzo 4 addizione, fascicolo 3. Also at the end of AST, inv. no. 100, 2a addizione, Olanda, non inventariata mazzo 1, there are a few copies of the same document. The items before and after the first text in the manuscript volume and the dispatches by Montagnini in this period) suggests that Ambel's piece was inspired by an intensive engagement of Montagnini with the Dutch context.

the War of American Independence and with reference to pamphlets about these affairs.³² In folders related to the free port of Villefranche near Nice a solicited advice piece written by the Dutch international lawyer Pestel can be found that answers questions about issues of neutrality and trade that tie in with the projects of Piedmontese economic development.³³

Perhaps the most striking aspect of Montagnini's dispatches, however, is his sending abroad of numerous copies of Dutch pamphlets to inform Perrone of the nature of the Dutch debate around 1778.³⁴ Amongst the foreign ambassadors the Piedmontese were exceptional, not to say obsessive, collectors and producers of documents, pamphlets, extracts, memoirs and translations that were sent to Perrone.³⁵ In this sense, Montagnini fit the standard profile of the Turinese diplomat. Yet, his postings of pamphlets, along with his letters and further texts that can be found, also in seemingly unrelated places at the Archivio di Stato in Turin, form the material of a rather coherent and very deliberate enterprise of working out how based on a recognition of a common interest with Britain in the Balance of Power, treaty agreements might be developed that would leave sufficient liberty to develop the domestic economy. To conclude, if Montagnini with his collections, postings of pamphlets and impressions of the problems of neutrality that confronted the Dutch Republic had an important formative impact on the foreign policy line developed by Perrone and others in Turin, we may start to wonder whether it is justified to play down in any way the significance of this period and its main type of writings – political pamphlets – in the history of Dutch politics and political thought.

Shades of Anglo-patriotism: 'I will ask Mr Necker'

The year 1778 was indeed, as was recognised in Turin and everywhere, a crucial one for the Dutch Republic. When France entered the War of

³² AST inv. no. 29, 2a addizione, Nizza Porto di Villafranca, mazzo 5, fascicolo 13. A text written by a self-declared "cosmopolitan" that is difficult to place.

³³ AST inv. no. 29, 2a addizione, Nizza Porto di Villafranca, mazzo 5, fascicolo 15.

³⁴ Cf. Blok, *Archivalia in Italië*, 77–84, for a discussion of the AST holdings related to Dutch history over a longer period.

³⁵ See G. Ricuperati, "Gli strumenti dell'assolutismo sabaudo. Segreterie di stato e consiglio delle finanze nel XVIII secolo," *Rivista Storica Italiana* 102 (1990), and his contribution to Utet's *Storia d'Italia* republished as *Lo stato sabaudo nel Settecento. Dal trionfo delle burocrazie alla crisi d'antico regime* (Turin, 2001), *passim*.

American Independence and the Dutch remained neutral a situation arose that resembled the conditions at the outset of the Seven Years' War, when the Dutch exploitation of opportunities to carry French goods created tensions between Britain and the Republic. The same texts that had appeared between 1756 and 1759 justifying the British line on the rights of neutral states to trade with belligerents, by writers like James Marriott, translations of which were then commissioned by the British ambassador Sir Joseph Yorke, were republished, as were earlier pieces in favour of the French position.³⁶

Thus, a situation re-emerged that pitted two sides against each other in a series of high-profile pamphlet debates within the Dutch Republic. However, those who sided with France and those who sided with Britain, just as in the Seven Years' War, did so not to pave the way for a military or political alliance with these dominant states, but, rather to the contrary, to safeguard the Dutch neutral status and align it with Dutch economic interests. However obvious this point may be, it is an important one to make, since unspecified emphasis on the party aspect in relation to French or English sympathies has tended to obscure the character of the issues at stake. Within the pamphlet debates of 1778 and 1779 the issue was not whether to be neutral or not, but rather the resultant issue of how to be neutral. This issue was approached through questions that were first properly formulated at the beginning of the Seven Years' War and was as charged as any discussion over a decision whether to join France or Britain in a military alliance would have been. Indeed, pamphleteers constantly accused each other of advocating visions that were not really aimed to be in the Dutch interest but rather too close to the alleged manipulative legal and political ideas advanced by either the French or the British delegates and their hired pens. Yet, to take these allegations literally and understand the central

³⁶ James Marriott, *The Case of the Dutch Ships Reconsidered* (London, 1778) [Reprint of 1759]. British works published at the beginning of the Seven Years' War and Yorke's orders for their translation (by the The Hague publisher P. De Hondt, see, e.g. Knuttel 18722 and 18723, respectively Dutch and French translations of Charles Jenkinson, *A Discourse on the Conduct of the Government of Great Britain, in respect to Neutral Nations* (London, 1758) are discussed by T. Helfman, "Commerce on Trial. The Neutral Rights Revolution of the Seven Years' War," in a volume I am currently editing on the commerce and the law of neutrality in the eighteenth century (forthcoming). On Joseph Yorke in the late 1770s, see H.M. Scott, "Dutch Politics and the Origins of the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War," *Historical Journal* 31:3 (1988). The most prominent direct restatement of the earlier French position was in the form of the republication of a pamphlet by Plumard de Dangeul, to be discussed below.

divide between *neutralistes* and Orangists in this way would be misguided. This particular opposition properly referred to the principal and recurring issue of under what circumstances the Dutch were obliged by previous treaty arrangements to send 6,000 troops (which by 1756 already was a symbolic number) to support Britain in any war against France and whether fulfilling this treaty obligation automatically turned the Dutch from neutrals into belligerents.

The broader and much more significant context within which this problem had a place regarded the future of Dutch trade and economic competitiveness. Here, one strand within the Dutch debates, throughout the period covered in this chapter, held an outlook on the true interest of Dutch commercial neutrality that to a great extent followed the legal and political framework put forward by British lawyers and politicians. This was the outlook that seems to have fascinated the Turinese as well as the one that Emer de Vattel, apparently in response to the problems that were discussed in the Dutch Republic in the 1740s, justified in the groundbreaking chapters on neutrality of his *Droit des Gens* of 1756.³⁷ According to Vattel, and a number of Dutch pamphleteers, the obligation to send 6,000 auxiliary troops pertained to a form of ancient treaty regulation that had to be satisfied without resulting in the enlistment of the Dutch among the belligerents. In his treatment of the proper conduct of neutrals in wartime Vattel also opened up the problem of public and private investment in foreign state debts. The role that foreign investments could play in stabilising international relations also featured heavily in the political thought of the most clearheaded and visionary proponent of what may be called the 'English' side of the debate, the Amsterdam financier Isaac de Pinto.³⁸

Pinto's activity as a writer (including his unpublished manuscripts and anonymous pamphlets) and political adviser coincides neatly with the period covered in this chapter. Yet, despite his outspoken views, it has proven hard to situate him in the context of Dutch political economy as well as to measure his actual influence on policy debates

³⁷ E. Vattel, *Le Droit des Gens*, 2 vols (London, 1758), vol. 2 (Book III, chapters 6 and 7). See also A.C. Carter, *The Dutch Republic in Europe in the Seven Years' War* (London, 1971), 90–91.

³⁸ On Pinto see Nijenhuis, *Een Joodse Philosophie*, and more recently J.L. Cardoso and A. de Vasconcelos Nogueira, "Isaac de Pinto (1717–1787). An Enlightened Economist and Financier," *History of Political Economy*, 37:2 (2005).

of the time.³⁹ To integrate Pinto into a more general Dutch eighteenth-century historiography it is useful to take into account two anonymous pamphlets by a *Bon hollandais* that read alongside his other works are hard to imagine as not by the same author.⁴⁰ The objective of these two pamphlets, published in 1778 and 1779, and quickly triggering a host of critiques, was to alert his compatriots to the dangers of misjudging the options available to the Dutch Republic in fine-tuning their neutrality policy.

It was not the case, the *Bon hollandais* averred, that the prospect of American Independence and the decay of English power and wealth would give Dutch traders opportunities to regain a larger share in global trade and reconquer lost markets. This was the promise that French and American pamphleteers dangled in front of Dutch merchants,⁴¹ which combined well with the rights rhetoric of English dissenting patriotism that gained ground in the same years in the Dutch Republic.⁴² Pinto was at pains to expose the falsity, simplicity and greater dangers of this perspective that captivated the Dutch, and in particular the Amsterdam, trading and finance community.

The starting point of his argument was the narrow issue of contraband and the justice or injustice of the British seizure of Dutch ships. Here Pinto drew the line that the 1667, 1674 and 1678 treaties together qualified the applicability of the 'free ships, free goods' principle, guaranteeing the neutrality of belligerent goods on board of Dutch vessels, to such an extent that reverting to the common British position on contraband was not at odds with the letter and certainly not the spirit

³⁹ Certain signs suggest a significantly privileged relation to Bentinck and the Stadtholder as a political adviser: the piece (see above, note 30) by him found in the AST, clues in Nijenhuis, *Een Joodse Philosophie*, 12–13, 47, 103–4, and the tone and content of certain letters written to Bentinck in the late 1740s (British Library (henceforth BL), Egerton 1746, f. 198 (7 January 1749) and f. 205 (15 January 1749) and Egerton 1862, f. 10 (6 April 1749) and f. 31 (12 April 1751)).

⁴⁰ *Discours d'un bon Hollandois a ses compatriotes, sur différents objets intéressants* (1778) Knuttel 19189, (Dutch translation 19190 and with criticisms added republished in 1779, Knuttel 19242) and *Second discours d'un Bon Hollandais à ses compatriotes* (1779) Knuttel 19246. The first pamphlet was attributed to Pinto in three critiques of the *Bon hollandais*, Knuttel 19243, 19245 and 19248. Nijenhuis, *Een Joodse Philosophie*, 30, 43, encountered the same attributions to Pinto, which she traced back to Dérial de Gomicourt's articles in the *Lettres Hollandaises*, vol. 1 (1779), 141, 267–268 (see also vol. 3 (1779), 178); yet Nijenhuis came to the opposite conclusion that these pamphlets were not written by Pinto.

⁴¹ Pinto, *Bon hollandaise*, Knuttel 19242 and *Second discourse*, Knuttel 19256.

⁴² See Colenbrander, *Patriottentijd*, vol. 1, 70, 113, and S.R.E. Klein, *Patriots Republikenisme. Politieke Cultuur in Nederland (1766–1787)* (Amsterdam, 1995).

of these Anglo-Dutch agreements. Pinto further accepted the distinction that had become a principle of law in the British Admiralty Courts between trading with the enemy (as a form of true, proper, trade) and trading for the enemy (as a form of false, carrying, trade).⁴³ What mattered for Pinto was the fact that the just-mentioned seventeenth-century Anglo-Dutch treaties had been intended by the Dutch ancestors to secure their European and colonial territorial possessions and to secure Dutch foreign trade, which could be done only by creating a loose alliance with Britain, whose natural interests as a maritime power were close enough to those of the Dutch. Now these same treaties were invoked to disingenuously attempt to separate the Dutch and British interests.

However, for Pinto in particular, the question of Dutch neutrality in 1778 did not primarily concern the issue whether the Dutch would manage to remain a neutral party in the balance of power, nor was it fundamentally about the legal fallout of wartime trade 'with' as well as 'for' the enemy. Neither the juridical question nor the diplomatic approach captured what was indirectly at stake, but what he perceived to be of central importance in dealing with the legal and diplomatic challenges that had to be confronted: The political economic identity and role of the Dutch Republic in the interstate system.

Here, the significance of the Dutch role in interstate affairs lay not in the much discussed carrying of ammunition and masts to France,⁴⁴ and certainly not in the Dutch Republic joining either side militarily, but all the more in finance. Just as Dutch internal stability, according to Pinto, required that the stadtholder be placed at the head of the Dutch India companies and that the orderly payments of dividends be guaranteed, so internationally the Dutch financier community had a global responsibility in not straying from the proper laws of credit. As Pinto had argued in his only major treatise, of 1771, the foundation of the world economy, once international trade had been so politicised (as it

⁴³ See R. Pares, *Colonial Blockade and Neutral Rights (1739–1763)* (Oxford, 1938) and Helfman, "Commerce on Trial". The legal distinction between trading 'for' and 'with' the enemy may go back to the distinction between carrying trade and real trade formalised in J. Harrington, *The Commonwealth of Oceana*, ed. J.G.A. Pocock (Cambridge, 1992), 198: "it is one thing to have the carriage of other men's goods, and another for a man to bring his own unto the best market".

⁴⁴ E.E. de Jong-Keesing, *De economische crisis van 1763 te Amsterdam* (Amsterdam, 1939), argued that the Seven Years' War did not increase Dutch trade volumes, which, in the middle of World War II, sparked a controversy among Dutch economic historians.

had already) that foreign trade ceased to exist, resided in the financial services offered by the Amsterdam capital market and the 'neutral', orderly, lending of money against properly determined interest rates.⁴⁵ In his 1778/1779 pamphlets Pinto applied this same perspective and echoed Vattel's earlier views on state borrowing in wartime. It could not be the case, Pinto argued, that the American insurgents should be able to borrow money against five percent interest whereas the French offered a rate of seven percent. This was absurd, Pinto fulminated, as he added "I will ask Mr Necker (...) if these colonies already believe they deserve more credit than these Powers [i.e. France]".⁴⁶ Moreover, in this frivolous absurdity, the result of a cynical propaganda campaign, lay a grave danger that threatened the stability of the interstate system. Not only would American independence upset international relations, which was an obvious point. But if it came about at the cost of corrupting the one and only mechanism on which rested the entire weight of international economic relations the shock ultimately would be immense.

In other words, where the British realised the importance of Dutch finance for international stability and protected Dutch foreign trade and thereby Dutch political independence in order to facilitate the stability of the interstate trade system, the Franco-American campaign unleashed in 1778 exploited Dutch sentiments in order to arrange for the buying of American liberty, which came at the cost of threatening the durability of foreign trade full stop. This, from Pinto's perspective, clearly no longer had to do with Dutch political and military neutrality, but with the much more fundamental dimension of the neutrality of international trade.

Amidst polarised debate within the Dutch Republic about the strength of the British and French constitutions in relation to the size of the respective state debts, Pinto's perspective was understood and shared by few. Instead it tended to be ridiculed and criticised for its pro-Englishness.⁴⁷ Thus, it was also overlooked how Pinto, who declared he had published his *Essay* to convince David Hume to change his views on the politics of debt finance (and possibly also on the future

⁴⁵ Isaac de Pinto, *An Essay on Circulation and Credit: in Four Parts; and a Letter on the Jealousy of Commerce* (London, 1774) [Transl. of the 1771 French original], 219–221, see also 203–204 and 197–198.

⁴⁶ Pinto, *Bon hollandais*, Knuttel 19242, 41.

⁴⁷ For example in a pamphlet from 1779, entitled *Engelsche syllogismen* (1779) Knuttel 19300.

viability of trade republics), since the 1740s consistently held the same political vision in all his works and activities. For Pinto, financial markets formed a mediator of complex interstate political and economic relations, an essential interface through which individuals and states could be brought more easily to act in their proper self-interest. Indeed, the other side of Pinto's bullish reference to Jacques Necker concerned the latter's efforts, no doubt much acclaimed by Pinto and possibly seen by him as a result of his own ideas, to discipline the French state's finances to conform to these civilising mechanisms.

The first platform where Pinto brought his political economic vision into practice was immediately after the rise to power of Stadtholder William IV in 1747 when Pinto, together with Willem Bentinck van Rhoon, devised a set of reforms which aimed to establish William IV as a patriotic heroic reformer and saviour of Dutch credit.⁴⁸ The message of the pamphlets published in 1778/1779 evidently came from the same perspective but now connected to wider concerns of global economic and political stability. Only by recognising these wider concerns could the Dutch see the potentially disastrous effects of making the wrong choice. Proper interests dictated that the Dutch stick to the British understanding of commercial neutrality. It was in this way that Pinto's longer term vision of the simultaneous undoing of "Jealousy of Trade" and the restoration of the Dutch as a specialist carrying-trade nation could be realised. This, however, first required that the Dutch keep their nerves, prove resistant to Franco-American empty promises, and protect international capital markets from being infested by political motives.⁴⁹

Pinto's overall political vision ought to be compared – which cannot be done at length here – with the outlook on Dutch neutrality of his

⁴⁸ I will publish a separate essay in the context of the project "*Guerra, commercio e neutralità nell'Europa d'Antico regime (1648–1789)*", directed by Antonella Alimento on how the groundwork for this vision was laid in Pinto's early text, probably from 1747, "Tribut patriotique". To be found in the Nationaal Archief (NA), The Hague, Gogel collection, inv. no. 165; discussed by Nijenhuis, *Een Joodse Philosophie*, 99–103. A nice illustration of the way in which Pinto saw the reforms taking place is provided by one of his letters to Bentinck where he describes how a particular plan he has developed will be so blatantly and undeniably beneficial that the 'anti-stadtholder' party cannot but accept it and be outmanoeuvred (Egerton 1746, f. 198, from 7 January, 1749).

⁴⁹ The title of Pinto's *Letter on the Jealousy of Commerce*, published as an appendix to his *Essay*, itself was a nod to David Hume's essay "Of the Jealousy of Trade" (Hume, *Political Essays*, 150–154). On the history and wider political debate about competitive rivalry in the eighteenth century, see Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, in particular the introduction.

contemporary Elie Luzac, who published and commented on two works by Jacques Accarias de Serionne on the wealth and commerce of Holland.⁵⁰ Unlike Pinto, Luzac did not recognise the British depredations of Dutch ships as rightful,⁵¹ yet he fiercely opposed the attempts by Dutch merchants to exploit neutrality to profit from war and judged that the interruption of general trade in wartime cost the Dutch a lot more than the fleeting extra profits of wartime trade.⁵² Luzac's general idea was that the Dutch somehow continued to have a real, culturally based, competitive advantage in the international carrying trade,⁵³ and that neutrality, a proper separation of war and trade, was destined to restore former Dutch greatness.

Thus, Luzac and Pinto both saw a future of international commerce in which the status of the Dutch Republic as a trade republic among territorial commercial societies could be restored after "Jealousy of Trade" was somehow neutralised. Yet, their underlying political theories appear to have differed considerably. What both writers were intensely aware of by the late 1770s was 1) the danger in the fact that in 1778 the French offered trade privileges to merchant communities of different cities, thereby implicitly denying Dutch sovereignty, 2) that the British, unlike in the Seven Years' War, would be inexorable in their position on the law of neutrality and would not negotiate a mutually satisfactory compromise,⁵⁴ 3) that rival visions of the commercial

⁵⁰ On Luzac's political economy see, W.R.E. Velema, "Homo Mercator in Holland. Elie Luzac en het achttiende-eeuwse debat over de koophandel," *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 100:3 (1985), and his *Enlightenment and Conservatism in the Dutch Republic. The Political Thought of Elie Luzac* (Assen, 1993), 115–143. Accarias de Serionne's works, mostly published by Luzac, are *La Richesse de la Hollande*, 5 vols (Leiden, 1778), *Les intérêts des nations de l'Europe*, 2 vols (Leiden, 1766) and *Le commerce de la Hollande*, 3 vols (Amsterdam, 1768). The former was transformed – in the words of Velema, *The Political Thought of Elie Luzac*, 119 – into Elie Luzac, *Hollands rijkdom, behelzende den oorsprong van de koophandel*, 4 vols (Leiden, 1780–1783). On Accarias de Serionne, who acted as a reviewer for the influential Brussels *Journal de commerce*, see H. Hasquin, "Jacques Accarias de Serionne économiste et publiciste français au service des Pays-Bas Autrichiens," *Études sur le XVIIIe siècle* 1 (1974), J. Accarias, "Un publiciste dauphinois du XVIIIe siècle Jacques Accarias De Serionne Sa Famille, Sa Vie, Ses Ouvrages," *Bulletin de l'Académie delphinale* 3 (1889).

⁵¹ Luzac joined the chorus of those who called the English rights discourses chimerical under the pseudonym of Reinier Vryaart, *Openhartige brieven, om te dienen tot opheldering en regte kennis van de vaderlandsche historie*, 4 vols (Leiden, 1781–1784) vol. 2 (section 5), 120–121.

⁵² See Accarias de Serionne, *La Richesse de la Hollande*, vol. 2, 205.

⁵³ See also Pinto, *An Essay on Circulation and Credit*, 213–214, 220.

⁵⁴ Carter, *The Dutch Republic in Europe in the Seven Years' War*, 104–119 in particular.

opportunities offered by American independence diverged greatly and held the potential to trigger the merchant community into political action.

Haarlem 1771–1779 and the paradoxes of Dutch patriotism

The fears of Pinto and Luzac soon turned out to be well founded and what in Turin was deemed highly unlikely soon materialised, a fourth Anglo-Dutch War broke out as a direct result of the Dutch failing to maintain their neutrality. What had happened, it seemed to some people and to most British observers, was that the Dutch inexplicably had gone mad and acted little short of completely against their own interest.

In a pamphlet of 1782, John Andrews wondered how the Dutch had lost the capacity to recognise the importance of the mutual understanding that lay at the foundation of the Anglo-Dutch alliance.⁵⁵ Here Andrews transcended the commonplace that the Dutch were more than other nations motivated by an “extensive warmth and avidity for lucre”.⁵⁶ Not only did it appear to be the case that being “prejudiced by the allurements of gain” had estranged the Dutch from their true interest. Moreover, Andrews hinted that the exploitation of international trade rivalry itself by France, Spain and the American rebels in general was capable of killing off the ordering principle of political interest in the interstate system.⁵⁷ Andrews sketched the Dutch as “acting a part, evidently dictated by a total disregard to the circumstances of the time”⁵⁸ and simultaneously provided a case for the necessity of correcting this modern form of “superstition”, which Andrews evidently saw as the purpose of the Fourth Anglo-Dutch war, before it spiralled completely out of control.

In the final instance, the Dutch “most absurd and gross infatuation” with, and “delusion” and temptation by the French into a “labyrinth of error” was a lost opportunity to learn from history and save the modern world. Precisely during a time in which “the grand object of European politics [was] the acquisition of wealth through commercial channels”,

⁵⁵ John Andrews, *Considerations on the Present Interests of the Dutch with Respect to Great Britain* (1782) Knuttel 20083, 2–5.

⁵⁶ Andrews, *Considerations*, 6.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 6–7, also 23 and 28–52 onto the wider and longer-term effects (in a longer historical context).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

it was crucial not to repeat the errors of Carthage and Greece to fail to ally in combating Rome,⁵⁹ but instead to consolidate the arrangements made by the Venetians and the Dutch themselves who had combined their identity as trade republics with effective interaction with European monarchies.⁶⁰

Less inclined to this form of analysis, but all the more ready to confront the Dutch with the consequences of their wavering support for a common cause in the Balance of Power, the British ambassador Sir Joseph Yorke, disdainful as ever of the Dutch, judged that the Dutch Republic was not behaving like a state, failed to think politically, and that its "ailment" needed healing. The remedy the British ambassador offered the sick Republic was to bring it to its senses by going through an Anglo-Dutch War.⁶¹

Thus, the British devised a form of shock therapy that addressed the Dutch on a diplomatic and military level. In a strict sense the Dutch may also be said to have fallen victim to a French scheme that led the Dutch Republic into war. Yet, what happened since 1778 in Franco-Dutch relations, the result of which was the true object of the British declaration of war, must first of all be associated with a specific domestic context of a failed process of economic reform.

The known story is that the British argument about the political exigencies of warfare, and the jurisprudence formed by the Admiralty Court, notoriously did not fare well with the Dutch merchant community, as the experience of the Seven Years' War had proven. And the Dutch hardly needed to be provoked to feel defrauded of their interests and rights. Precisely this became part of the French strategy of sensitising Dutch resistance against what they considered the British defiance of the 1674 'free ships, free goods' clause in 1778. The French masterstroke in breaking up the Anglo-Dutch alliance consisted of a propaganda campaign fielded at different levels, urging the merchant communities of Amsterdam and other cities in the seaborne provinces – and approaching them directly, instead of through national or provincial bodies – to: 1) stand by the terms of the 1674 treaty and protect their neutral shipping with armed convoys, 2) bear in mind the advantages and fruits of good relationships with the Americans, 3) recognise the ways in which the decline of Dutch trade resulted

⁵⁹ Ibid., 13–15.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 16–20, 28.

⁶¹ Scott, "Dutch Politics and the Origins of the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War": 583.

from a long-term British plan – of which the law of neutrality was part – to push the Dutch out of global trade. In addition, the French promised, and gave, trade privileges to those cities that supported these views in practice.⁶²

It was this strategy, and this last measure in particular, that hugely worried one political commentator and pamphleteer, the secretary of the Utrecht law court and winner of the famous 1771 essay prize of the Haarlem Society on the restoration of Dutch trade, Hendrik Herman van den Heuvel.⁶³ In a pamphlet published in 1779, *Impartial Advice on Unified Opinion and Moderation by Batavus*,⁶⁴ van den Heuvel listed, “as a neutral Hollander”, the very good reasons why it made sense to heed the French advice and embark on a different course in foreign politics. It was true, van den Heuvel stated, that the Dutch neutral status was the key to sizeable gains in wartime, that events in North America and future prospects of trade enlargement might well help to restore the lustre of Dutch trade, that the Dutch had a right based on the 1674 treaty to enforce neutral trade vis-à-vis Britain through military and naval power, that the British themselves had not hesitated to profit from the same rights when the Dutch were at war and that the British legal perspective on neutrality was entirely contradictory and hardly worthy of refutation.⁶⁵ However, all these reasons together were still not good enough to stand by the rights of

⁶² For insight into French and American attempts to influence Dutch public opinion see J.W. Schulte Nordholt, *The Dutch Republic and American Independence* (Chapel Hill, 1982) [Transl. of the original Dutch, 1979]. An eighteenth-century text that discusses a French campaign along with its effects is A. Kluit, *Iets over den laatsten Engelschen oorlog met de republiek, en over Nederlands Koophandel deszelfs bloei, verval en middelen tot herstel* (Amsterdam, 1794), who cites on page 73 the anonymous *History of the Internal Affairs of the United Provinces, from the Year 1780, to the Commencement of Hostilities in June 1787* (London, 1787) as providing abundant proof of orchestrated French immersion. See also the first chapters of Colenbrander, *De Patriottentijd* and D.M.M. van Hangest baron d’Yvoy van Mijdsrecht, *Frankrijks invloed op de buitenlandsche aangelegenheden der voormalige Nederlandsche Republiek gestaafd door oorspronkelijke stukken uit de archieven te Parijs* (Arnhem, 1858).

⁶³ To my knowledge no monograph or extensive study exists on H.H. van den Heuvel. I have written an essay on the emergence of the *Oeconomische Tak* of the *Hollandsche Maatschappij der Wetenschappen* entitled ‘The Restoration of Dutch Trade and the Establishment of the Economic Branch of the Holland Society of Sciences, 1751–1830’ (to be published in a volume provisionally entitled *Patriots and Reformers. The Rise of Economic Societies in the Eighteenth Century*, co-edited with Jani Marjanen) in which his politics are discussed.

⁶⁴ H.H. van den Heuvel, *Onpartijdige Raadgevinge tot Eensgezindheid en Moderatie van Batavus* (1779) Knuttel 19256.

⁶⁵ Van den Heuvel, *Onpartijdige Raadgevinge*, Knuttel 19256, 4–6.

neutral trade. In fact, the profits from trade in alleged contraband goods were not as great as often claimed, neutral trade itself was only trade commissioned by France and did not lead to a structural growth of Dutch commerce and all imagined threats and risks that compromises to the British on the rights of neutral trade would damage the Dutch carrying trade were overstated. Besides, insurance premiums would rise and not only affect the competitiveness of the Dutch “economy commerce” (“*commercie van oeconomie*”) but also its “own trade” with the Indies and its luxury and manufacturing trade, which van den Heuvel saw as a related, yet ultimately more important dimension for Dutch economic development. Most of all, the Dutch simply did not have the power to stand up to Britain now.⁶⁶ Precisely at this time it was also not a good idea to try to do so and to give in to the “ardour” (*drift*) of partisanship. Britain was caught up at present in a situation where all its riches and entire empire resting on colonial trade might be lost and in consequence was in a state of “feverish rage”.⁶⁷ It was better to adopt the classical position of the neutral and “sit still” while events unfolded.⁶⁸

At this stage the discourse turned into a thinly veiled manifesto on how the economic branch (*Oeconomische Tak*) of the Haarlem Society, which van den Heuvel himself had set up, led the way in the alignment of ‘strict’ commercial neutrality and economic policy and acted as a proper channel for true Dutch patriotism.⁶⁹ In foreign politics van den Heuvel’s recommendation anticipated the initiative that would be launched soon after by Catherine the Great. Rather than to flirt with an alliance with France, which itself would be against the French interest, as van den Heuvel agreed with many contemporaries, the clever thing to do was to form a neutral league with the Nordic powers.⁷⁰ The greatest threat would be facing the Dutch if they lost their nerves, got too close to the French and were divided by the French offers to the Holland cities of trade privileges in return for political support.⁷¹

Van den Heuvel’s pamphlet triggered a few direct responses by pamphleteers who took issue with his pragmatic views on the law of

⁶⁶ Ibid., 6–11.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 12–15.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 15.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 16–17 and again 25–26.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 18–24.

⁷¹ Van den Heuvel, *Onpartijdige Raadgevinge*, Knuttel 19256, 4–6.

neutrality⁷² as well as a separate debate opened by a Frisian author who urged “VDH” to use his influence at the stadtholderly court to persuade William V to change his advice to the States General and support the bill for armed convoys of Dutch merchant ships.⁷³

What is significant about this last suggestion is that it implies that the traditional party sides – Orangists and Patriots – that are normally put against each other in historical reconstructions were not necessarily so far removed from one another, even by 1779. Van den Heuvel, who is mainly known as the initiator of the *Oeconomische Tak* of the Haarlem society, is commonly assumed to be an early figurehead of Dutch patriotism. Yet, what his pamphlets show is that he did not support, but was instead at pains to put a halt to, the development of a rival patriotism to the kind that he had dedicated himself to.⁷⁴ Such was the perceived ambiguity of van den Heuvel’s political economy and his advocacy of ‘strict’ neutrality as a midway between recognising rights of neutral trade that after the outbreak of the war with Britain he was accused of “sincere Anglo-Patriotic sentiments” by the subtitle of the pamphlet *Economic Calculation of the National Debt of England* which was sarcastically addressed to him.⁷⁵

Focus on van den Heuvel’s involvement in pamphlet debates in 1779 sheds new light on the known story of the outbreak of the Fourth Anglo-Dutch war. The movement of Dutch patriotism, by 1779 still, was not a pro-French or even anti-English political force, but represented a position in a debate on economic reform that had been ongoing since at least the 1740s. It was not paradoxical for a Dutch Patriot like van den Heuvel to be on good terms with people close to the Stadtholder and still be a leading Patriot. In sum, the anti-English political forces that emerged in 1778 and 1779 may well have intersected

⁷² *Brief aan den onpartydigen raadgevenden Batavus, en onzydigen lezer* (1779) Knuttel 19257, *Regtsgeleerde bedenkingen, aan den heer Batavus ter beoordeeling toegezonden* (...) (1779) Knuttel 19258, 19259 [French translation].

⁷³ For the ‘V.D.H.-debate’ see Knuttel 19250–19255. I suspect Knuttel 19254 (*Aanmerkingen op den Brief, van eenen goeden Fries aan den heer V.D.H* (1779)) may have been a response by V.D.H. himself to his first critics. Van den Heuvel’s Friesian family connections are mentioned by P. van der Vliet, *Onno Zwier van Haren* (1713–1779) (Hilversum, 1996), 381. The ‘V.D.H.-debate’ was entwined with the synchronously unfolding *Bon hollandais* debate.

⁷⁴ This reading is supported by a later text by H.H. van den Heuvel, *Klagten van Eenem Gryzen Hollander wegens den Tegenwoordigen Toestand van het Vaderland* (1780) Knuttel 19314.

⁷⁵ *Oeconomische Uitreekening van de Nationale Schuld van Engeland* (1782) Knuttel 20091.

with and fed upon the patriotism that had been developing in the Dutch Republic over decades, but was resolutely rejected and seen as dangerously destructive to a superior political and economic reform vision by its leading figures.⁷⁶

*The neutrality of Carthage and the 'Witten-Oorlog' in the
Seven Years' War*

If the signs indicate that 1779 saw the collapse of a specific Dutch economic reform debate, the inevitable next question is how its beginning can be determined. As discussed above, the fate of the Dutch economic reform process in the patriotic vision of van den Heuvel was linked to the preservation of 'strict neutrality'. This same notion was also put forward for the first time in a coherent sense by the somewhat idiosyncratic pamphleteer Jean Thomas La Fargue⁷⁷ in 1756, curiously after having been among the staunchest opponents of the *neutralistes* in the strict sense (see above) of those who were decisively against sending 6,000 auxiliary troops to Britain at various points in the 1740s.⁷⁸

Apparently, what La Fargue understood by 'strict neutrality' in 1756, differed fundamentally from what he considered to be at stake earlier when the neutrality of the Dutch Republic was discussed in 1742. More precisely, a preliminary reading of La Fargue's pamphlets in the early 1740s and his pieces published in 1756 suggests that he never changed his ideas, but that his responses to his main opponent in the earlier

⁷⁶ This fits with Andrews, *Considerations*, 25 who observed the rise of a different form of patriotism that he explained as the result of French rhetoric and propaganda efforts.

⁷⁷ The only work about La Fargue is by H.M. Mensonides, *Jean Thomas La Fargue als schrijver, vertaler en pamflettist* (The Hague, 1961). J. Hovy, *Het voorstel van 1751 tot instelling van een beperkt vrijhavenstelsel in de Republiek. (Propositie tot een gelimiteerd porto-franco)* (Groningen, 1966), has interesting remarks on La Fargue on pages 174, 261, 317, 323, 340 and a discussion of his contributions to the 1751 portofranco debate on pages 456–466. La Fargue was famous for being an ardent defender of the Orangist political line but an equally staunch critic of views he considered detrimental to that position, as a result of which he became ridiculed and unpopular. For example, when he wrote against the "plan Schrijver", named after the Amsterdam Luitenant-Admiraal Cornelis Schrijver, one of William IV's more prominent advisers, on naval reform and maritime security and a correspondent of Bentinck: Knuttel 18481, 18538–18539. See Hovy, *Het voorstel van 1751*, 261 and 340, where he characterises La Fargue's position as sadly at the margins ('zelfkant') of Orangism; which fits with Geyl, *Wittenoorlog*, 52, 57–60.

⁷⁸ The idea of 'strict neutrality' / true neutrality – not the shift – in Fargue was also picked up by Geyl, *Wittenoorlog*, 57–60.

context led him to redefine his political position as “truly neutral” in the 1756.

A brief discussion of context is in order. It is well known that since the 1740s, the Anglo-Dutch alliance in European military affairs of the preceding decades that had its roots in the late seventeenth-century Williamite Glorious adventure was no longer self-evident. The expiry in 1739 of the French commercial privileges that had been agreed at Utrecht in 1713, which the Dutch hoped to renew, formed a further complication of the Dutch position in foreign affairs.⁷⁹ Which side would the Dutch swing to? Would they stick to a loose friendship with Britain or be lured by the French?

One element that may have been significant in the events of the 1740s was the emergence within French political thought of an obsession with English political economy. Following writers like Jean-François Melon, author of the influential *Essai politique sur le commerce* of 1734, a group of writers headed by the later *Intendant de commerce* Vincent de Gournay thought of ways to emulate the British rise to global political and commercial power. La Fargue's *The True Interest of the Deceived Netherlands*⁸⁰ was a biting response to a pamphlet, published in French in 1741, allegedly by a *patriote hollandois*, whose aim was to expose the consistent British political manipulation of Dutch foreign trade in the seventeenth century, which after the third Anglo-Dutch war had reached a new stage by absorbing the Dutch into an unequal alliance that was nothing but a fiendish design to further reinforce British control over global trade.⁸¹ Interestingly, the *Lettre (...) par un*

⁷⁹ See Colenbrander, *Patriottentijd*, vol. 1, 32–38 (and chapter 2 in general); for the different perspectives of French and Dutch negotiators in the 1740s, Hovy, *Het voorstel van 1751*, 316–333; for the diplomatic background Carter, *Dutch Republic in Europe in the Seven Years' War*, 16–17, more in general her *Neutrality or Commitment. The Evolution of Dutch Foreign Policy. 1667–1795* (London, 1975) and – with a British focus – Arnoldina Kalshoven, *De diplomatieke verhouding tusschen Engeland en de Republiek der Vereenigde Nederlanden 1747–1756* (The Hague, 1915).

⁸⁰ *Het waere interest van 't misleide Nederland* (1741) Knuttel 17255.

⁸¹ Louis-Joseph Plumard de Dangeul, *Lettre écrite à un Seigneur du gouvernement par un Patriote Hollandois, Au sujet des Conjonctures présentes contenant Quelques-uns des principaux Motifs qui doivent empêcher les Provinces-Unies de prendre parti dans la présente Guerre de la Grande-Bretagne* (1741) Knuttel 17170–17172. The original pamphlet was translated and reprinted six times, and in various contexts where Anglo-Dutch relations needed to be disturbed, for which occasions new prefaces were written: Knuttel 18526 and 18527 (1756), 18563 (1757) and 19188 (1778). During the Seven Years' War these republications provoked angry reactions by La Fargue himself, whereas in 1778 it seems – by comparing the titles, publishing dates and Knuttel numbering – Pinto's *Bon hollandais*, discussed above, took over that role.

patriote hollandois is thought to have been by none other than Louis Joseph Plumard De Dangeul, a cousin of Véron de Forbonnais who is now best known as the author-translator of an influential comparison, published in 1754 under the pseudonym of John Nickolls, of the economic systems of France and Britain.⁸² The 1741 pamphlet, if the attribution (by E.J.F. Barbier) is correct, was Plumard's first work and triggered a set of replies by La Fargue, the second of which (as can be gleaned from its title) placed the Dutch Republic in between the economic systems of France and Britain as a crucial context for the future of the European state system.⁸³

Plumard's own argument was largely historical, may well have influenced other anti-English pamphleteers and historians like Wagenaar and later van der Capellen, and was based itself on a set of seventeenth-century Dutch political histories. An important clue as to the core objective of La Fargue's argument in response to his portrayal of Anglo-Dutch history is provided by one of Plumard's curiously selective, anti-English citations from Andreas Müller's *Vervolg van 't Verwerd Europe*. Plumard quoted from Müller Shaftesbury's famous declaration in 1673 that the Dutch Republic, the "eternal enemy both by interest and inclination" of England, had to be destroyed: "*Delenda est Carthago*".⁸⁴ Plumard gratefully echoed the author of the sequel to Petrus Valkenier's classic pro-Orangist *Verwerd Europa* that the English motive, he emphasised (or rather italicised), was "jealousy". And Plumard added that the new object of British jealousy was France. The same aggressive mechanisms of commercial Empire that had been at work in England in the later seventeenth century and that were then aimed at destroying the Dutch, now attempted to disingenuously enlist the Dutch in defeating the next obstacle to hegemony.

⁸² Louis-Joseph Plumard de Dangeul, *Remarques sur les avantages et les desavantages de la France et de la Gr. Bretagne: par rapport au commerce, & aux autres sources de la puissance des états, traduction de l'anglois, du chevalier John Nickolls* (Leiden, 1754). The work itself was based on, to a large extent a translation of, Josiah Tucker, *A Brief Essay on the Advantages and Disadvantages, which respectively attend France and Great Britain, with regard to Trade* (London, 1749).

⁸³ J.T. La Fargue, *Verhandeling aangaande den Oorsprong en Gesteltenis van den Koophandel en Scheepvaart van Grootbritannien en van Vrankrijk* (1743) Knuttel 17406.

⁸⁴ Plumard referred to Andreas Müller, *Vervolg van 't Verwerd Europa*, 2 vols (Amsterdam, 1688), 699 in his *Lettre par un patriote hollandois* (1741) Knuttel 17171, 39. The infamous speech by Shaftesbury was delivered on 5 February 1673.

La Fargue's answer to this blast entailed a subtler outlook on the effects of the Third Anglo-Dutch war. Whereas Shaftesbury had maintained that war was an appropriate measure to both turn England into the world's main trading nation and remove "the Loevestein, that Carthaginian party" from power, thereby turning the Dutch Republic into a possible ally, La Fargue quoted William Temple who in his *Observations* on the downfall of the Dutch Republic had warned his English readership that the motive of "jealousy" and the approach of conquest undermined attempts to attract foreign trade. Now, La Fargue analysed, the French in their efforts to emulate the English exploited Dutch "jealousy" both to drive a wedge between the mutually beneficent Anglo-Dutch commerce and to peacefully appropriate Dutch trade for its own political purposes.⁸⁵ This last strategy, apparently peaceful and favouring free trade, was more dangerous to the independence of the Dutch Republic than the threats of English war had been. While the Dutch "Carthage" had not been destroyed by war with the English, the chances were that giving in to the French temptations presented under the guise of free trade would ruin it. La Fargue's conclusion was that the Dutch interest dictated a continuation of the loose political friendship with Britain in the name of the neutrality of trade. In 1742 and again in 1756, when La Fargue called himself a "true neutral", his political vision derived from an understanding of the fate of the Dutch Republic as a state, and indeed the future of peace and foreign trade in Europe as related to the extent to which the interstate political order preserved the independence of commerce from the realm of conquest. The discussion between Plumard and La Fargue indeed was an early sign of what troubles the eighteenth century held in store.

According to La Fargue, the biggest threat to the Dutch "Carthage" was not other states' spirit of conquest by itself, but the dysfunctional and "jealousy"-inspired spirit of commerce that prevented the Dutch from seeing clearly their own interest. The actual challenge, from this perspective, lay not in fending off external military threats or initiating internal 'constitutional' or institutional reform, but first and foremost was to understand the past and present predicament of the Dutch Republic and develop a political economic reform strategy that secured

⁸⁵ See La Fargue, *Verhandeling aangaande den Oorsprong*, Knuttel 17406, 126.

its long-term independence. This was how La Fargue must have seen the peculiar “De Witt war” (*Wittenoorlog*) that broke out in 1757 when in a very short space of time the market was flooded with a large number of pamphlets disputing the legacy of John de Witt over his dead body. La Fargue himself actively participated in this war of words that was admirably documented by Pieter Geyl.⁸⁶ Geyl noted for instance that the *Wittenoorlog* featured the same writers who had encountered each other the year before in a pamphlet debate about the traditional issue of whether the Dutch should send 6,000 troops to defend Britain against France,⁸⁷ and added that the debate may well have been triggered by the anonymous publication, also in 1756, of the thirteenth volume of the *Vaderlandsche Historie* by the prolific Amsterdam historian and pamphleteer Jan Wagenaar, who himself contributed to most pamphlet debates that emerged in these years.⁸⁸ However, Geyl did not work out in greater detail his awareness that the debate about De Witt really was about the Dutch position in the Seven Years’ War and the Dutch political interest at large. Although Geyl noted the remarkable character of La Fargue’s contribution to the De Witt debate, the historian’s interpretation of the status of the debate, ironically, remained firmly within the boundaries of the faction polemics that La Fargue in the 1740s believed had to be transcended in order to safeguard the future of the Dutch Republic.

Epilogue: The 1751 ‘Propositie’ as a hinging point towards 1779

The discussion so far put together here is not one that lends itself to drawing fixed conclusions, but rather has been directed towards a

⁸⁶ Geyl, *Wittenoorlog*, 51–63, 86–92, 123–131 (on La Fargue’s role).

⁸⁷ Geyl, *Wittenoorlog*, 7–8. The main authors in this discussion were Jan Wagenaar, Pieter le Clercq, Batavus and J.T. La Fargue. There is unfortunately no account of the 1756 ‘Koopman’ neutrality debate [Knuttel 18508–18522, followed by more pamphlets on Dutch neutrality, its rights and naval protection in the next years], which itself was interrelated with the famous *Wittenoorlog*: Knuttel 18564–18633, 18674–18677, and the debate that was squeezed in between these two bigger discussions that followed the presentation of the “Plan Schrijver” (see note 76): Knuttel 18481–18482, 18538–18542. J.T. La Fargue contributed to all three debates.

⁸⁸ Geyl, *Wittenoorlog*, 13. On the Amsterdam historian Jan Wagenaar, see L.H.M. Wessels, *Bron, waarheid en de verandering der tijden. Jan Wagenaar (1709–1773), een historiografische studie* (The Hague, 1997) and L.H.M. Wessels, “‘Love for one’s nation’. The correspondence, 1757–1758, between Abraham Calkoen (1729–1796) and Jan Wagenaar (1709–1773),” *LIAS. Sources and Documents relating to the Early Modern History of Ideas*, 30:1 (2003).

number of suggestions that worked out in greater detail may revise our understanding of political debate in the Dutch eighteenth century. One conclusion that may be drawn, although it has not been the main focus of the piece, is that pamphlets are a source material that in the Dutch context at least can be used to bridge the gap between historical arguments about actual policy discussions and theoretical debates such as were played out in political thought treatises. If the aim is to better understand how the Dutch in the eighteenth century understood the world surrounding them and how they actually responded to its challenges, these sources are indispensable and currently conspicuously underutilised.

As far as the suggestions emanating from this piece are concerned, these may be discussed by identifying a few further texts and debates that seem of importance. The Koninklijke Bibliotheek in The Hague possesses a manuscript, included in its van Goens collection, the topic of which fits neatly with the argument of this chapter.⁸⁹ The manuscript has been attributed to van den Heuvel, whose patriotism, it emerged, should not be confused with the anti-English political movement that gained ground in the late 1770s.⁹⁰ In this text, the author researches the reasons for the outbreak of the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War and comes to the conclusion that these are very different from those that inspired the first three Anglo-Dutch Wars. While the English in the seventeenth century attacked a direct rival, in 1780 they prevented an indirect and almost abstract threat to the rules of global trade they wanted to defend. The portrayal of the Dutch as relegated to a marginal role in international politics forms no surprise, but the analysis it is based on is a strikingly self-effacing piece of political soul-searching in the aftermath of the British declaration of war. If from van den Heuvel to van Goens – the author and the owner⁹¹ of the manuscript – the Dutch

⁸⁹ KB, van Goens collection, 130 D3/ G13, dated 3 April 1783, f. 1–51, entitled “Beschouwing over de oorlogen van de Republiek, voornamelijk tegen de Engelsen, in het bijzonder betreffende de belemmering van het transport van scheepsbehoeften door neutrale naties”.

⁹⁰ Note that this text was included in the van Goens collection, based on the papers of the arch-Orangist and prominent pamphleteer Rijklof Michael van Goens.

⁹¹ The anxious message of the joined manuscripts in the KB by van Goens and Pinto of 1781/3 (KB, van Goens collection, 130 D3/ J; see note 30), as well as of other pamphlets written by van Goens around this period, was that the Dutch would sit still, behave politically as if they were neutrals, and certainly not seek any alliance with France – as insisted on by the explosive argument of Joan Derk van der Capellen tot den Pol, *Address to the People of the Netherlands* (1782) Knuttel 20137 (Transl. of *Aan het Volk van Nederland* (1781) Knuttel 19864–19865). The KB manuscript by Pinto

political spectrum was shell-shocked by the outbreak of war in 1780, this illustrates a massive break with the earlier part of the eighteenth century in which these same authors had put forward different political economic reform views.

From the time of William Temple,⁹² and further back, at least to Pieter de la Court, Dutch writers had put forward a wide array of plans to restore Dutch trade to its former status. It was also observed by the famous Bernard Mandeville that since the days of Temple, the central mechanisms of the Dutch frugal trade republic had developed in the direction of a complete commercial society, thus including aspects of luxury and social status into its fabric.⁹³ The question became the same as in all states across Europe: How to develop a complete, balanced national economy including agriculture, manufacturing industry and trade? Were higher tariffs needed or other measures to encourage new industries, or were free transit trade and free-ports the answer? Was agriculture the key to independence and how could the price of labour be brought down? Since the 1740s, these debates were complicated by the issue of the Anglo-French struggle for hegemony and the problems of commercial neutrality. La Fargue may well have been the first, at least in the Dutch Republic, to properly grasp the nature of the issue. We may even wonder about – and it might turn out to be very interesting – what is new in the position taken by Pinto in 1778 and 1779 compared with La Fargue's writings from the early 1740s.

Moreover, the same La Fargue also was the author of arguably the most visionary pamphlet surrounding the discussions – mainly amongst political insiders and merchants – that led to and followed the presentation of the 1751 *Proposal for a Limited Free-port*. This *Proposal*, the subject of the most detailed piece of historical analysis of

and van Goens was a response to this Address, I gather from the title as well as the content. The same recommendation to the Dutch was issued in 1782 by John Andrews as the conclusion of his *Considerations*, 48–52.

⁹² A. Tollenaer, *Remonstrantie ofte vertoogh, inhoudende verscheyden schatten van groote consideratie tot behoudinge ende vermeerderinge van het welvaren van de republique van Hollandt ende West-Vrieslandt* (The Hague, 1672). See Hovy, *Het voorstel van 1751*, 306.

⁹³ B. de Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees, or Private Vices, Publick Benefits* (London, 1723), 206–208. For a revisionist interpretation of Mandeville's political thought that fits with the direction of this chapter see I. Hont, "The early Enlightenment Debate on Commerce and Luxury," in *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Political Thought*, ed. M. Goldie and R. Wokler (Cambridge, 2006).

eighteenth-century Dutch political economy,⁹⁴ still should prove to be a fruitful object of research to better understand the nature of Dutch political economy before 1779. It was the first context in which the various options for the reform of the Dutch economy under the condition of modern competitive rivalry were discussed and the 1751 analyses would prove a point of reference until 1779.⁹⁵

What happened in 1779 may be better understood if the interpretation of the discussions around 1751 is detached from the imposition of later nineteenth- and twentieth-century associations onto debates about free trade and protection as well as from the caricatured presumption that in any political debate about Dutch commerce the interests of (pro-free trade) merchants and ('mercantilist', centralist bureaucratic) manufacturers necessarily are pitted against each other.⁹⁶ Just as the focus on political factions is ultimately insufficient for deepening our understanding of the *Patriottentijd*, so the myths of nineteenth-century scientific economics are eminently unhelpful in accounting for the dilemmas that occupied the minds of eighteenth-century writers on economic reform.

What has been described by Colenbrander as a gradually more refined French strategy of dismantling of Dutch statehood and breaking down the Anglo-Dutch alliance, perhaps imposes onto earlier events a restrictive view informed by the later history of the 'Continental System'. Instead, the argument in this article suggests, processes of Dutch economic reform attempts intersected with the dynamics of French state-building since the 1730s, ultimately to be confronted with the intrinsic problems of the political way in which Dutch republican trade was construed. What is required to bring this out properly is a framework that the political vision developed by the Patriots whose influence rose in 1779 and 1780 can be connected to.

⁹⁴ By Hovy, *Het voorstel van 1751*. See K. Stapelbroek, "Dutch Commercial Decline Revisited. The Future of International Trade and the 1750s Debate about Free Ports," *Annali della Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli* 43 (2009), which engages with the conclusions of this book.

⁹⁵ See Hovy, *Het voorstel van 1751*, 630–640. Pinto, in his letter on the jealousy of commerce (*An Essay on Circulation and Credit*, 207–212) insightfully defends the 1751 *Proposal*.

⁹⁶ Disregarding the clues in his own citations of texts by Jan Marselis and the *Verhandeling*, that is, the very text composed by Hope to explain the *Proposal's* aim as reconciling the interests of merchants and (textile) manufacturers, Hovy ultimately fails to arrive at conclusions on this level; Hovy, *Het voorstel van 1751*, 352, 356, 369; his conclusions are in the summary, 653–659.

Here the issue of the credit of America, touched upon by Pinto (see above), but also high on the agenda of the ringleader of the Dutch Patriot propaganda efforts, Baron Joan Derk van der Capellen, could well be among the main points that help explain the sudden demise of the previous forms of Dutch reform politics after 1779. Only in the middle of the War of American Independence did this event take place. What may be argued to have effectively happened was that the Dutch gave up their neutral position when Amsterdam financiers offered loans to the American leaders that were perceived to be below the going interest rate. Were Amsterdam financiers persuaded that American credit was higher than people like Pinto believed or was some other factor at work?

Precisely by, for example, looking at the early pamphlets, from the 1770s, of the later leaders of the new Patriot movement, one comes to recognise pamphlets not as blunt propaganda tools to hammer in stale faction divides, but as sources for tracing the changing dynamics in reform debates; at which point they become singularly useful historical instruments.

In a way this should not be surprising. After all the Turinese gathered Dutch pamphlets and wrote memoirs also around 1751 about the *Proposal for a Limited Free-port* simply because they were eager to learn from the Dutch political debates about free ports.⁹⁷ However, if Pinto's way of thinking about the dramatic ramifications of the violation of the neutrality of finance, that he warned about in his pamphlets of 1778 and 1779, may be taken seriously, the reconstruction of Dutch pamphlets towards 1780 could possibly lead to more far-reaching and Revolution-related historiographical implications than one might expect.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ AST, inv. no. 100, 2a addizione, Olanda, mazzo 1 addizione, fascicolo 16.

⁹⁸ Implications that would resemble the character of the interrelations between Revolution and debt finance discussed in M. Sonenscher, *Before the Deluge. Public Debt, Inequality, and the Intellectual Origins of the French Revolution* (Princeton, 2007) and his "The Nation's Debt and the Birth of the Modern Republic. The French Fiscal Deficit and the Politics of the Revolution of 1789," *History of Political Thought* 18 (1997); rather than the vast – mainly Dutch – literature on "1787, the Dutch Revolution" (whether with or without question mark) or the sort of views that go back at least to R.R. Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution. A Political History of Europe and America, 1760–1800*, 2 vols (Princeton, 159).

Part III

Public Debate and the Media

HANDWRITTEN PROPAGANDA. LETTERS
AND PAMPHLETS IN AMSTERDAM DURING
THE DUTCH REVOLT (1572–1578)

Femke Deen

Introduction

On 3 August 1572, a young man knocked on the door of the residence of Amsterdam burgomaster Jan Claesz van Hoppen. Hardly had a maid opened the door when the man shoved a letter into her hands and ran away. Signed by William of Orange, the letter contained an urgent appeal to the city's magistrate to join the rebellion against the 'tyranny' of the Duke of Alba, governor of the Netherlands.¹ Four months earlier, Orange and his supporters had started their successful campaign against Alba with the siege of Den Briel, and now they controlled a large part of the provinces of Holland and Zeeland. Amsterdam, however, refused to yield. The city was to remain loyal to the Habsburg government of Philip II, and to the Catholic Church, until 1578. Amsterdam was during this period practically a Catholic enclave in Protestant country. Its choice to remain loyal had far-reaching consequences for the course of the Dutch Revolt. Due to the strategic position of the city, the King's army was able to reach deeply into the rebel-controlled area, and could lay siege to Haarlem, Alkmaar and Leiden.² No wonder, then, that the rebels were extremely keen to get Amsterdam on their side. In addition to several attempts to take the city by force, the rebels launched an extensive propaganda campaign to win over the Amsterdam citizenry. Handwritten letters played an

¹ Stadsarchief Amsterdam (hereafter SA), Tijds geschriften (B 1563), *Dagverhaal van de Troebelen 1563–1572. Genomen uit een handschrift inhoudende de handvesten, keuren en ordonnantiën van Amsterdam* (hereafter *Dagverhaal*), 4 August 1572, f. 26v°. The original letter has not been preserved, but the author of this diary copied (part of) the text.

² H. van Nierop, *Het foute Amsterdam. Rede uitgesproken bij de aanvaarding van het ambt van hoogleraar in de Nieuwe Geschiedenis aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam op vrijdag 13 oktober 2000, Oratiereeks Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen* (Amsterdam, 2000), 7.

important part in this campaign. In content, function and intended audience, these letters show a strong resemblance to the printed pamphlets that have earned the Dutch Revolt the reputation of a propaganda war.³ This article seeks to explore the phenomenon of the propaganda letters and their relation to printed pamphlets.

In recent years, a growing number of historians have criticised the paradigm of the print revolution, and drawn attention to the interconnectedness of oral, handwritten, printed and visual media in early modern communication.⁴ In the wake of this process, the sharp divide between scribal culture and print, which has dominated research for decades, has blurred. Scribal publication is no longer regarded as the medieval predecessor of print, but as a means of communication that co-existed and interacted with printed works long after the advance of the printing press.⁵ Although the term 'publication' is currently associated with the process of printing large numbers of copies, in late medieval and early modern times the word was used for the disclosure of information by oral proclamations, the singing of songs, writing letters or reading aloud. By viewing the act of publication as a "movement from a private realm of creativity to a public realm of consumption", the producing and spreading of certain kinds of manuscript copies also falls under this heading, as do acts of speech.⁶

Some forms of scribal publication have already received their fair share of attention. The handwritten newsletter is for instance now being studied as a medium in its own right, not just as the forerunner

³ R. Esser, "'Concordia res parvae crescunt'. Regional Histories and the Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century," in *Public Opinion and Changing Identities in the Early Modern Netherlands. Essays in honour of Alastair Duke*, ed. J. Pollmann and A. Spicer (Leiden/Boston, 2007), 229.

⁴ Groundbreaking studies are: R. W. Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk. Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation* (Cambridge, 1981); Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England 1500–1700* (Oxford, 2000); R. Darnton, "An Early Information Society. News and the Media in Eighteenth-Century Paris," *The American Historical Review* 105:1 (2000); R. Cust, "News and Politics in Early Seventeenth-Century England," *Past and Present* 12 (1986). More recent: F. de Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice. Rethinking Early Modern Politics* (Oxford, 2007).

⁵ See for instance: H. Love, *The Culture and Commerce of Texts. Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Amherst, 1998); N. Moser, "'Poezijlust en vriendenliefd'. Literaire sociabiliteit in handschrift en druk na 1600," *Spiegel der Letteren* 49:2 (2007); A. Walsham and J. Crick, "Introduction. Script, Print, and History," in *The Uses of Script and Print, 1300–1700*, ed. J. Crick and A. Walsham (Cambridge, 2004).

⁶ Love, *Culture and Commerce of Texts*, 36. See also: F. Riddy, "'Publication' Before Print. The Case of Julian of Norwich," in *The Uses of Script and Print*, ed. Walsham and Crick, 39.

of the printed newspaper.⁷ The circulation of literary manuscripts and verse represents another focus of study. Up to the eighteenth century, many authors consciously chose to publish their work in manuscript, wishing to avoid the 'stigma of print'.⁸ Humanist letter-writing has been explored extensively, along with its influence on everyday correspondence.⁹ However, the role of handwritten copies in political communication has been largely neglected. An important exception is the work of Harold Love, who focused on the widespread trade in separates, short manuscript copies containing single texts like speeches, treatises, proclamations and letters. In content, function and manner of dissemination, these separates resemble printed pamphlets.¹⁰

The likeness between handwritten political texts and printed pamphlets has hardly been explored, however.¹¹ An explanation for this lack of attention could be that in recent debates on the definition of pamphlets, two characteristics of pamphlets have come to dominate – their form (printed) and their function (persuasion of the reader).¹²

⁷ M. Infelise, "From Merchants' Letters to Handwritten Political Avvisi. Notes on the Origins of Public Information," in *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe*, vol. 3, *Correspondence and Cultural Exchange in Europe, 1400–1700*, ed. F. Bethencourt and F. Egmond (Cambridge, 2007); S. A. Baron, "The Guises of Dissemination in Early Seventeenth-Century England. News in Manuscript and Print," in *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe*, ed. B. Dooley and S. A. Baron (London, 2001); I. Atherton, "'The Itch Grown a Disease'. Manuscript Transmission of News in the Seventeenth Century," in *News, Newspapers and Society in Early Modern Britain*, ed. J. Raymond (London, 1999).

⁸ G. L. Justice and N. Tinker, *Women's Writing and the Circulation of Ideas. Manuscript Publication in England, 1550–1800* (Cambridge, 2002); M. Elsky, *Authorizing Words. Speech, Writing, and Print in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca, 1989); J. Blaak, *Geletterde levens. Dagelijks lezen en schrijven in de vroegmoderne tijd in Nederland 1624–1770* (Hilversum, 2004).

⁹ J. R. Henderson, "On Reading the Rhetoric of the Renaissance Letter," in *Renaissance-Rhetoric / Renaissance Rhetoric*, ed. H. F. Plett (Berlin/New York, 1993); G. Burton, "From Ars dictaminis to Ars conscribendi epistolis. Renaissance Letter-Writing Manuals in the Context of Humanism," in *Letter-Writing Manuals and Instruction from Antiquity to the Present. Historical and Bibliographical Studies*, ed. C. Poster and L. C. Mitchell (Columbia (SC), 2007).

¹⁰ For the definition of separates: Love, *Culture and Commerce of Texts*, 13.

¹¹ Some authors have commented briefly on the existence of handwritten copies of pamphlets. Baron, "The Guises of Dissemination", 43; J. Peacey, *Politicians and Pamphleteers. Propaganda during the English Civil Wars and Interregnum* (Aldershot, 2004), 36, 172; J. Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2003), esp. 99, 128. Raymond does mention that he would have liked to examine the manuscript transmission of texts more thoroughly. Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering*, xiii.

¹² See: M. Meijer Drees, "Pamfletten: een inleiding," in *Het lange leven van het pamflet. Boekhistorische, iconografische, literaire en politieke aspecten van pamfletten*

The fact that several pamphlet collections in the Netherlands contain both handwritten copies and seemingly 'objective' printed copies of ordinances and proclamations has been ascribed to the lack of a clear definition of pamphlets amongst early collectors.¹³ W.P.C. Knuttel, who compiled a catalogue of the most extensive pamphlet collection of the Netherlands, excluded most ordinances and handwritten texts, declaring that these can hardly be regarded as pamphlets.¹⁴

Remarkably, in an introduction to a reprint of Knuttel's catalogue written in 1978, H. van der Hoeven defined pamphlets as being a reaction in "print or handwriting" on current events.¹⁵ Both he and the early Dutch collectors and compilers of catalogues who included handwritten texts and printed 'official' policy were right to do so.¹⁶ In the sixteenth century, handwritten copies and printed pamphlets were not regarded as isolated phenomena, but as part of the same corpus of texts. The word pamphlet, after all, is an anachronism that has been used only from the nineteenth century onwards.¹⁷ Early modern contemporaries used words like 'libels, pasquils, refrains, booklets, writings and songs'. Arguably the terms were used for both printed and manuscript writings. When a chronicler mentioned a 'libel' hanging

1600–1900, ed. J. de Kruif, M. Meijer Drees and J. Salman (Hilversum, 2006), 10–11; Craig E. Harline, *Pamphlets, Printing, and Political Culture in the Early Dutch Republic* (Dordrecht, 1987), 3; Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering*, 4.

¹³ Harline, *Pamphlets, Printing, and Political Culture*, 234; P. Verkruijsse, "Gedruckt in seghwaer, op de pars der lijdsamheyt". Boekwetenschap en pamfletliteratuur, in *Het lange leven van het pamflet*, ed. De Kruif, Meijer Drees and Salman, 42–43. See for an overview of literature about the definition of pamphlets in the Netherlands: M. Reinders, "Printed Pandemonium. The Power of the Public and the Market for Popular Political Publications in the Early Modern Dutch Republic" (PhD diss., Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2008) 17–18, esp. citation 89. On the presence of edicts in the pamphlet catalogues see also the article of Monica Stensland in this volume.

¹⁴ W.P.C. Knuttel, *Catalogus van de pamfletten-verzameling berustende in de Koninklijke Bibliotheek*, 9 vols (The Hague, 1889), vol. 1, iii.

¹⁵ H. van der Hoeven, "Verzamelaars en pamfletten. Dilettanti en drukwerk," in W.P.C. Knuttel, *Catalogus van de pamfletten-verzameling berustende in de Koninklijke Bibliotheek. Herdruk, met handgeschreven verbeteringen, aanvullingen en varianten*, 9 vols (Utrecht, 1978) [Reprint], vol. 1, xv. O. Giraldo was also less strict regarding the condition that pamphlets should be printed, in an article dating from 1967. Quoted in: Verkruijsse, "Gedruckt in seghwaer", 32.

¹⁶ See for example: J.K. van der Wulp, *Catalogus van de tractaten, pamfletten enz. over de geschiedenis van Nederland, aanwezig in de bibliotheek van Isaac Meulman*, 3 vols (Amsterdam, 1866–1868). Harline considers Van der Wulp "the worst offender" of including "non-pamphlet materials". Harline, *Pamphlets, Printing, and Political Culture*, 237.

¹⁷ Harline, *Pamphlets, Printing, and Political Culture*, 2.

on the church's door, it could just as easily have been a handwritten text.¹⁸ The same goes for songs, many of which were handwritten, copied and spread further by hand.¹⁹ The regulations concerning the spread of dissident information provides further evidence for this assumption. Censorship was directed not only at printed expressions of dissent; authorities fervently pursued handwritten and oral utterances as well. As late as 1639, the Amsterdam burgomasters explicitly prohibited the "publishing in print or in writing" of scandalous booklets, songs and tidings.²⁰

In this article the importance of manuscript publication in political communication will be demonstrated by examining the handwritten letters with which Orange and other rebels bombarded the city of Amsterdam in the period 1572–1578. This piece seeks to assess how the rebels used these letters to try to get the Amsterdam population on their side. This form of scribal publication was closely related to pamphlets. They were used alongside each other as propaganda

¹⁸ Pieter Bor for example frequently speaks of "writings" ("geschriften"), "pasquils" or "letters" ("briefkens"), most of the time without specifying whether they were printed or handwritten. P. C. Bor, *Oorsprongk, begin, en vervolg der Nederlandsche oorlogen, beroerten, en borgerlyke oneenigheden* (...), 4 vols (Amsterdam, 1679–1684) vol. 1, 34–35, 36, 43 and passim. Sometimes he mentions specifically that texts were printed: *ibid.*, vol. 2, 57. See also H. van Biesten, "Anteykeningen, gedaen van Broer Hendrik van Biesten, Orateur van de Minnebroeders binnen Amsterdam, op de nijeuwe mare en geschiedenis, dat geschiet is binnen en omtrent Amsterdam, sedert den jaere 1634 tot den jaere 1567; getrouwelijc gecomponeert," *De Dietsche Warande* 7 (1866): 532.

¹⁹ In the beginning of the seventeenth century, a song about Maurice was spread in handwritten copies: A. Th. van Deursen, *Bavianen en Slijkgeuzen. Kerk en kervolk ten tijde van Maurits en Oldenbarnevelt* (Assen, 1974), 360. About handwritten "handbills" with songs: Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture*, 299–334. A certain Pieter Heyndricksz, who was questioned in 1574 for singing the *Wilhelmus*, a famous Beggar song, when exiting the Oude Kerk, maintained that he had never seen the song "in writing or in print". SA, Archief schout en schepenen, inv. no. 274, Confessieboeken 2 July 1572 – 16 May 1578 (hereafter Confessieboek 274), f. 130–130v°. Claes Overlander, a wealthy merchant whose trial will be described in more detail later, kept several manuscript copies of newsletters and songs, and was accused of spreading handwritten copies of these texts. Confessieboek 274, f. 97.

²⁰ SA, Archief burgemeesters, Keurboek I (hereafter Keurboek), f. 82. See for an ordinance from 1618 using the same formulation: Knuttel 2661. A strict ordinance against "pasquils", proclaimed in May 1566, dictated that the "making, dictating, composing, writing, sowing and pasting" of libelous writings should be stopped. *Handvesten ofte privilegien ende octroyen; mitsgaders willekeuren, costuimen, ordonnantiën en handelingen der stad Amsterdam*, ed. H. Noordkerk and J.P. Farret, 3 vols and 2 supplements (Amsterdam, 1748–1778), vol. 1, 80. In 1565, the Amsterdam city government issued two by-laws in which the "writing, printing or singing" of songs criticising the magistrate was forbidden. Keurboek F, 24 January 1565, f. 156; 12 July 1565, f. 162.

instruments – that is to say, they were consciously used to influence a wider audience in its actions and way of thinking, to the advantage of the instigators.²¹ However, as a propaganda tool, correspondence had advantages that made it, under certain circumstances, more useful than pamphlets in reaching and persuading a certain public. In Amsterdam, printed pamphlets played a marginal role in the years 1572–1578 compared to the many propaganda letters. The intrinsic advantages of letter-writing, discussed below, made this medium far more useful in influencing the city's public debate – they functioned as personalised and localised extensions of a broader propaganda campaign.

Two different forms of letters will be analysed. The handwritten appeals by Orange and other high-ranking rebels, directed to the populace and to cities, expressed the body of political ideas of the rebels that was also communicated in printed tracts and pamphlets. The second type of letters was written by exiles to residents of their former city. The exiles, Amsterdam burghers who had fled the country after 1567 and had been banished by Alba's Council of Troubles, played an important part in the dissemination of both these forms of propaganda letters and cleverly used correspondence as an instrument to influence the public debate in their hometown.

The public quality of letters

Correspondence was of vital importance in the urban media system of Amsterdam. It connected business partners, different levels of government and family members, conveying essential information and binding together communities of like-minded individuals. The contents of these letters often reached more people than the recipients alone. Reading and writing were not individual activities, as they are now. Private correspondence was often shared with others by reading (parts of) letters aloud.²² Wouter Jacobsz, a priest from Gouda who

²¹ G. S. Jowett and V. O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, 1999), 3, 42. See also: Reinders, "Printed Pandemonium", 68; D. R. Horst, *De Opstand in zwart-wit. Propagandaprenten uit de Nederlandse Opstand 1566–1584* (Zutphen, 2003), 15–16.

²² On the blurred boundaries between private and public in early modern letter-writing: G. Schneider, *The Culture of Epistolarity. Vernacular Letters and Letter Writing in Early Modern England, 1500–1700* (Newark, 2005), 68–72; J. Daybell, "I Wold

fled to Amsterdam in 1572 when his city joined the rebellion, kept a meticulous diary in which he noted constantly that letters were shared with others – they were copied, spread and read aloud in inns and marketplaces, on the streets and in front of churches.²³ In the same manner, official publications often ended up on the streets as well. On 11 August 1573, for example, he wrote that a letter “or a copy thereof” to the city government in Gouda was displayed in Amsterdam.²⁴ Other chroniclers also mention the copying and dissemination of official and private correspondence among the Amsterdam burghers.²⁵

It was the elusive aspect of correspondence which gave letters an important advantage over print as a vehicle for information and propaganda. Although the authorities prosecuted all libellous utterances in speech, manuscript and print, the latter came with an organised trade which made it easiest to regulate. Of course, printers and booksellers constantly dodged restrictions by printing forbidden books and pamphlets anonymously and selling them under the counter.²⁶ There is also evidence that the authorities did not always follow up on their regulations: Bookmen who were barred from their trade sometimes kept on selling and printing books.²⁷

Wyshe my Doings Myght Be ... Secret. Privacy and the Social Practices of Reading Women's Letters in Sixteenth-Century England,” in *Women's Letters Across Europe, 1400–1700. Form and Persuasion*, ed. J. Couchman and A. Crabb (Aldershot, 2005), 137–45.

²³ Wouter Jacobsz, *Dagboek van broeder Wouter Jacobsz (Gualtherus Jacobi Masius) prior van Stein Amsterdam 1572–1578 en Montfoort 1578–1579*, ed. I.H. van Eeghen, 2 vols (Groningen, 1959) (Hereafter: *Dagboek van broeder Wouter Jacobsz*), 20 September 1572, 18; 2 October 1572, 21; 10 October 1572, 26 and passim. See for letters as a source for rumours: H. van Nierop, “And Ye Shall Hear of Wars and Rumours of Wars. Rumour and the Revolt of the Netherlands,” in *Public Opinion and Changing Identities*, ed. Pollmann and Spicer.

²⁴ *Dagboek van broeder Wouter Jacobsz*, 290. See also: *ibid.*, 19 November 1573, 340; 4 March 1575, 478; 10 February 1576, 557, 5 January 1577, 628.

²⁵ SA, Archief Handschriften, inv. no. 59, *Copie van de Beroerte ende oneenicheyt, in de steede van Amsterdam ontstaen in den jaere 1566 en 1567, gecopieert uyt de Notitie, gehouden bij Jan Betsz. Rodenburgh* (hereafter *Copie van de Beroerte*), f. 42v–43v^o; Van Biesten, “Anteykeningen”: 534.

²⁶ H. van Nierop, “Censorship, illicit printing and the Revolt of the Netherlands,” in *Too Mighty to Be Free. Censorship and the Press in Britain and the Netherlands*, ed. A. Duke and C.A. Tamse (Zutphen, 1988).

²⁷ Pieter Pietersz Swertken, for example, was officially a shopkeeper after being banned from the book trade in 1560, but records of Christoffel Plantijn's printing shop in Antwerp show that he remained active in the book trade: L. Voet, “Production and Sales Figures of the Plantin Press in 1566,” in *Studia bibliographica in honorem Herman de la Fontaine Verwey*, ed. S. van der Woude (Amsterdam, 1966), 430. Printers and booksellers could also easily move to another city: Jelis Jansz moved his business

Still, being an established printer or bookseller meant being an easier target for searches and inquiries. Paper and quill were easier to hide and cheaper to obtain than a printing press, which made manuscript publication accessible to a wider group of people. The production of printed document needed time and money. Handwritten copies were quickly fabricated and could be distributed immediately.²⁸ Stoffel Jansz, for example, wrote in 1568 that a pamphlet was published first in writing and then in print.²⁹ Propaganda letters could enter the city through the legal courier system, disguised as 'real' letters. However, letters had one more overpowering advantage as a vehicle of propaganda: Their message could be easily adapted to a local market, meaning they could target a more narrowly defined audience. The letter campaigns that were conducted by William of Orange are a telling example of this practice of tailoring messages to the public.

William of Orange's propaganda letters

Historians have increasingly recognised Orange's talent as a propagandist. It is well-known that Orange was personally concerned with the production of pamphlets and prints. He gathered around him a number of gifted artists and writers who produced pamphlets, songs and prints that glorified him, condemned his adversaries and articulated his political and religious ideas.³⁰ Unjustly, the letters he wrote to the different cities and to the populace of the Netherlands have been largely overlooked and not regarded as being part of the same propaganda

to Enkhuizen after his conviction in 1560: *De Amsterdamsche boekdrukkers en uitgevers in de zestiende eeuw*, ed. E. W. Moes, 4 vols (Utrecht, 1988) [Reprint], 278–280.

²⁸ Baron, "The Guises of Dissemination", 42; Andrew Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion* (Cambridge, 2005), 147; Love, *Culture and Commerce of Texts*.

²⁹ 'Oock soo sijnder in geschrift ende naderhandt in druck uyt gegaen seekere deertgen articulen (...): *Copie vande Beroerte*, f. 97v^o. The articles themselves: 97 v^o–101.

³⁰ H. Cellarius, "Die Propagandatätigkeit Wilhelms von Oranien in Dillenburg 1568 im Dienste des niederländischen Aufstandes," *Nassauische Annalen* 79 (1968); A. Duke, "Dissident Propaganda and Political Organisation at the Outbreak of the Revolt of the Netherlands," in *Reformation, Revolt and Civil War in France and the Netherlands 1555–1585*, ed. P. Benedict et al. (Amsterdam, 1999); P. A. M. Geurts, *De Nederlandse Opstand in de pamfletten 1566–1584* (Nijmegen, 1956); Horst, *De Opstand in zwart-wit*; R. van Stipriaan, "Words at War. The Early Years of William of Orange's Propaganda," *Journal of Early Modern History* 11:4–5 (2007): 332; K.W. Swart, "Wat bewoog Willem van Oranje de strijd tegen de Spaanse overheersing aan te binden?" *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 99 (1984).

efforts.³¹ There are striking similarities between these letters and the printed pamphlets, however, and the letters can be seen as an integral part of the still developing political thought of the Revolt.

Two handwritten appeals by William of Orange dating from 1570, for instance, strongly resemble printed pamphlets of the period. The two proclamations, which addressed the entire populace of the Netherlands, were drawn up by publicist Jacob van Wesenbeke, the former pensionary of Antwerp.³² They were circulated amongst sympathisers of the Prince in an effort to collect money to support a planned armed invasion.³³ The message in these two documents was similar to several printed publications that appeared after Orange's failed attack in 1568. These pamphlets were in turn strongly influenced by earlier writings of Wesenbeke himself in which the defence of ancient liberty and privileges was given as a justification for armed rebellion.³⁴

From April 1572 onwards, shortly after the rebels had started their successful march into Holland and Zeeland, the rebel propaganda was increasingly directed at the areas that remained loyal to Philip II. In the spring of 1572 two letters to the entire populace of the Netherlands

³¹ Geurts mentions some of the handwritten appeals to the populace of the Netherlands, see the next reference. Van Vloten describes the letters written to the different cities in his chronological accounts. J. van Vloten, *Nederlands opstand tegen Spanje, in zijn eerste ontwikkeling en voortgang (1572–1575)* (Haarlem, 1858), 5, 15, 20 and passim. Van Stipriaan briefly states that letters were part of Orange's propaganda campaign, but does not expand on this. Van Stipriaan, "Words at War": 332.

³² Geurts, *De Nederlandse Opstand in pamfletten*, 40–41; R. Fruin, "Prins Willem I in het jaar 1570," in *Robert Fruin's verspreide geschriften*, ed. P.J. Blok, P.L. Muller and S. Muller Fz (The Hague, 1900 [1897]), 131–132. Wesenbeke was appointed counsellor in the beginning of 1570. He was to travel the Netherlands to collect money and rally support for Orange's planned attack. The instruction for Wesenbeke: Database Correspondence William of Orange (<http://www.inghist.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/WVO>), no. 8062 (to: Jacob van Wesenbeke, 9 August 1570).

³³ The first handwritten appeal, dated 22 April 1570, was directed at the "Estates, lords, knights, nobles, sheriffs, burgomasters, bailiffs, guildmasters and good inhabitants" of the Netherlands: Database William of Orange, no. 10474 (to: inhabitants of the Netherlands, 22 April 1570). Six months later, another written proclamation to all inhabitants of the Netherlands was spread, in anticipation of a planned siege of Enkhuizen and other cities in the northern part of Holland. Ibid., no. 10333 (to: inhabitants of the Netherlands, 9 August 1570). About the planned attack on the 'Noorderkwartier', and the reasons why the attack never took place: Fruin, "Prins Willem I in het jaar 1570".

³⁴ M. van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt 1555–1590* (Cambridge, 1992), 120–126. See especially: *Verklaringhe ende Wtschrift des Duerluchtigsten, Hoochgeborenen Vorsten ende Heeren, (...) Willem, Prince van Oranien (...)* (1568) Knuttel 164; *Waerschouwinge Des Princen van Oraengien (...)* (1568) Knuttel 168.

urged them to rise up against their oppressors. A printed copy of the first letter was spread simultaneously.³⁵ In the beginning of June copies of a circular letter, calling for an uprising against Alba and a request for money, were sent to the major cities in Holland.³⁶

Another indication of the collaboration between print and manuscript are the many appeals written by Orange to the cities still in the King's hands, sent in the spring and summer of 1572.³⁷ In these letters, he urged these cities to join the rebellion. Similar pleas to the provinces loyal to Philip were spread simultaneously in printed pamphlets. In 1573, for example, two letters were printed, both written by the States of Holland and directed to the provinces still under Philip's control.³⁸ A recurrent theme in these writings was the right of disobedience based on ancient privileges. Another resemblance was the emphasis on unity and concord: Both the cities and provinces were strongly advised to unite themselves with the rest of Holland, for only in concord would they prosper again.³⁹

These general themes were referred to in all letters, but the letters also addressed local issues and recent developments. It was this flexibility that made letters such a powerful propaganda tool. In two letters to the fishing towns Veere and Middelburg, for example, Orange

³⁵ Database William of Orange, no. 10867 (to: inhabitants of the Netherlands, 14 April 1572). The printed copy can be found in the Zentralbibliothek in Zürich. A declaration to all inhabitants of the Netherlands, summing up Orange's reasons for rising against Alba, was drawn up in Latin in June: *ibid.*, no. 11168 (to: inhabitants of the Netherlands, 16 June 1572).

³⁶ The copy for Gouda was saved: *ibid.*, no. 10438 (to: guilds, inhabitants, regents and civic guards of Gouda, 8 June 1572).

³⁷ Four identical letters were sent on 20 April to Zwolle, Kampen, Tiel and Harderwijk: *ibid.*, no. 11407 (to: masters, nobles, community, city regents and civic guard of Zwolle, 20 May 1572); no. 3809 (to: city regents of Kampen, 20 May 1572); no. 9655 (to: mayors, council, nobles, masters, civic guard and community of Tiel, 20 May 1572); no. 6963 (to: city regents of Harderwijk, 20 May 1572). In the summer, a new offensive started: no. 3810 (to: city regents of Kampen, 3 August 1572); no. 10755 (to: citizens and city regents of Amersfoort, 6 August 1572); nr. 5377 (to: city regents of Zwolle, 6 August 1572); no. 6967 (to: inhabitants and city regents of Dendermonde, 1 September 1572); no. 10121 (to: inhabitants of Middelburg, 25 February 1573).

³⁸ *Copie eens Sendtbriefs der Ridderschap, Edelen ende Steden van Hollandt (...)* (1573) Knuttel 210; *Sendbrief. In forme van Supplicatie aen die Conincklike Maiesteyt (...)* (1573) Knuttel 213.

³⁹ For this argument in the writings of the rebels: Van Gelderen, *Political Thought*, 128–129. See also: Esser, “‘Concordia res parvae crescunt’”; J. Pollmann, “Eendracht maakt macht. Stedelijke cultuurijsden en politieke werkelijkheid in de Republiek,” in *Harmonie in Holland. Het poldermodel van 1500 tot nu*, ed. D. Bos, M. Ebben and H. te Velde (Amsterdam, 2007).

promised a recovery of the herring fishery if they chose his side.⁴⁰ In a letter that was sent four days later to Enkhuizen, which was already negotiating with the rebels over their surrender, Orange stressed the untrustworthiness of the Spaniards, to prevent the people of Enkhuizen from being lured back into the arms of the central authorities.⁴¹

The most obvious conclusion one can draw from this far from conclusive overview would be that the handwritten proclamations were used to reach only a small group (sympathiser or the authorities), whereas the printed copies were meant for a wider, unspecified public – the population or the provinces as a whole. This is partly true. Although the handwritten letters were indeed meant for a smaller audience – in this case the city's population – it was still an anonymous collective. The letters were not meant to be private. The rebels disseminated these letters in much the same manner as printed pamphlets to ensure a wider circulation, as becomes clear from the example of Amsterdam.

Rebel letters in Amsterdam

Amsterdam was an important target for the rebels, and this was reflected in the intensity of the propaganda efforts.⁴² A few months after the young man had delivered the letter to the house of burgo-master Jan Claesz van Hoppen in 1572, mentioned at the beginning of this article, another epistle signed by Orange was spread throughout the city.⁴³ In this case, many copies were sent to different people, and very soon, rumours about the letter thrived amongst the Amsterdam citizens. According to Wouter Jacobsz, it was said that the Prince of Orange summoned the city regents to take sides with him. The Prince

⁴⁰ *Database William of Orange*, no. 6962 (to: city regents of Middelburg, 1 May 1572); no. 5293 (to: city regents of Veere, 1 May 1572).

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, no. 7608 (to: city regents and inhabitants of Enkhuizen, 5 May 1572). This letter was saved as a supplement to a letter from Bossu to Alba, meaning it was intercepted and might not have reached its intended recipient.

⁴² In Wesenbeke's instruction, Orange urges him to put extra effort into persuading Amsterdam, Dordrecht and Enkhuizen. With their support would come not only large amounts of money, but also strategic harbours. *Ibid.*, no. 8062 (to: Jacob van Wesenbeke, 9 August 1570). In November 1570, Wesenbeke drew up a plan for a surprise attack on Amsterdam: no. 8065 (from: Jacob van Wesenbeke, 2 November 1570).

⁴³ SA, Archief Burgemeesters, inv. no. 44, letter no. 42 (Orange to burgomasters, aldermen, governors, civic guards, citizens and other good inhabitants of Amsterdam, 1 November 1572). A day later, this letter was followed by another from the States of Holland: *Kronijk van het Historisch Gezelschap te Utrecht* (1854): 162–163.

promised clemency if the city gave itself up willingly, referring to Middelburg, the city that had joined the revolt a little earlier. If Amsterdam refused to yield, the city was threatened with destruction. Different stories about the letter circulated. Wouter Jacobsz wrote that it was uncertain if there even was a real letter. Some thought the rumour was spread by evil-minded people “of which many were found these days”.⁴⁴ A few days later, however, the rumour turned out to be true when the city’s clerk announced a by-law from the window of the city hall, commanding everybody who had received a copy of the letter to deliver it unopened to the burgomaster.⁴⁵

These letters were probably sent directly to sympathiser and acquaintances. They could disperse the message further, not only by divulging the contents and starting rumours, but also by pasting the letters on walls or public buildings. In 1574, for instance, a missive personally signed by Orange was found in Amsterdam, plastered on the door of the Nieuwe Kerk. A Catholic burgher took it off and delivered it to the burgomasters.⁴⁶ This letter was part of a renewed propaganda attack on Amsterdam, following the Relief of Leiden (October 1574), of which a letter from Louis de Boisot, described below, was also part. In the same month, Orange wrote to the city’s pensionary, asking him to use his influence to persuade the burgomasters to change their course.⁴⁷

Letters were copied in large quantities and spread anonymously. In October 1573, a farmer pressed three copies of the same letter into the hands of Gerrit Burghertsz. The missive was signed by “your fellow brothers and lovers of the King and our fatherland, the citizens and inhabitants of the county of Holland”. It contained a long and eloquent appeal to the “pious burghers and inhabitants of Amsterdam” to show that they were real men who refused to be sucked dry and used by

⁴⁴ “Sij beloofden groote genaede, sulx Middelburch geschiet waer, soe verde sij met vriendschap haer wilden overgeven, maer dreychden haer met die wuyterste bederfnisse, waert saeke sij nu niet en quamen (...)”. *Dagboek van broeder Wouter Jacobsz*, 5 November 1572, 453.

⁴⁵ *Keurboek G*, 8 November 1572, f. 68v°. Cf. SA, Archief Handschriften, inv. no. 59, *Copie uyt de Notitie, geschreven door Stoffel Jansz, beroerende de beroerten van den jare 1566 tot den jare 1575 binnen Amsterdam* (hereafter: Stoffel Jansz), 8 November 1572, f. 248v°.

⁴⁶ The burgomasters sent the letter through to Brussels: *Database Correspondence*, no. 7204 (to: inhabitants of Amsterdam, 17 October 1574).

⁴⁷ SA, Archief Burgemeesters, inv. no. 44, letter no. 69 (William of Orange to Adriaen Sandelijn, 10 October 1574).

“strangers”. Amsterdam’s refusal to change sides was named as the cause for all disaster and devastation in Holland.⁴⁸ This referral to the deviant course of the city was not new – it was a recurrent theme in the letters from the rebels and reflected the public debate amongst the Amsterdam citizens. The debate about the isolated position of Amsterdam within Holland grew fiercer with the increase of poverty and the persistent refusal of the city government to make peace with Orange. By referring to this refusal time and again, the letters struck a chord with the population.⁴⁹ The Amsterdam burghers also proved sensitive to the epithet of bloodthirsty murderers, a reputation the city had earned for the persecution of Protestants and dissidents after 1568. This theme recurred not only in the printed and written appeals but also in the so-called Beggar songs.⁵⁰

A telling example of the way in which the letters both reacted to and fuelled the public debate can be found in the reaction to a letter from the States of Holland that arrived in October 1576. In this letter, Amsterdam was once again offered a chance to unite itself with Holland.⁵¹ According to Wouter Jacobsz, people discussed this letter fiercely. Rumour was that the States had formally appealed to Amsterdam to join them.⁵² Two weeks later turmoil arose when rumours of a possible siege of Amsterdam started to circulate. Wouter Jacobsz noted that many Amsterdam inhabitants were angry about the city regents’ earlier refusal of the offer in the letter. Many feared that this refusal would drive the city to the “utmost despair”.⁵³ In the intervening period, rumour of another letter from the rebel Northern Quarter further stirred up discontent amongst the population.⁵⁴ Criticism of the magistrates’ refusal to consider making peace spread

⁴⁸ Ibid., letter no. 53 (anonymous to inhabitants of Amsterdam, 26 October 1573).

⁴⁹ F. Deen, “‘O Amsterdam Moordadich’. Geuzenliederen in Amsterdam, 1566–1578,” *Historisch Tijdschrift Holland* 40:3 (2008).

⁵⁰ Ibid.: 185–186.

⁵¹ The letters themselves: SA, Archief Burgemeesters, inv. no. 44, letter no. 84 (States of Holland to those of Amsterdam, 2 October 1576).

⁵² *Dagboek van broeder Wouter Jacobsz*, 4 October 1576, 599.

⁵³ Ibid., 21 October 1576, 604.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 13 October 1576, 602. Earlier that month, another prominent exile, Willem Baerdesen, wrote to Amsterdam with an urgent appeal to free itself of Spanish rule. SA, Archief Burgemeesters, inv. no. 44, letter no. 83, (Willem Baerdesen to those of Amsterdam, 1 October 1576).

to such an extent that in December 1576 a by-law was issued, strictly forbidding any negative commentary about local policy.⁵⁵

Although it remains difficult to ascertain the precise effect of this propaganda, it is apparent that the letters at least reflected the fears and anxieties of the Amsterdam populace. And who could better understand the sentiments of their families and former neighbours than the Amsterdam exiles?

Exiles

The city's magistrate was deeply suspicious of the exiles, and its efforts to control the admission of messages and people concentrated for an important part on the former Amsterdam burghers. During the rebel march of 1572, the presence of former exiles who had returned after the general pardon of 1570 proved of vital importance in the surrender of many Holland towns.⁵⁶ The Amsterdam magistrate had allowed only a limited number of exiles to return, and this is regarded as one of the main reasons why Amsterdam avoided the fate of the other towns in Holland.⁵⁷ However, it proved difficult to prevent all contact between the Amsterdam exiles and their families and business associates who had stayed behind, regardless of strict ordinances forbidding any correspondence between them.⁵⁸ Some exiles even returned to the city, despite the danger of getting caught.⁵⁹ In the minds of the burgomasters, a relationship existed between the presence of the exiles and the diffusion of news, songs and dissident opinions. They issued a by-law in May 1572, calling on the populace to search everywhere for an exile named Pieter van Duyeren. The same by-law prohibited the dissemination of "false tidings", a daily practice of both burghers and "strangers".⁶⁰ The fact that most Amsterdam exiles settled

⁵⁵ Keurboek G, 12 December 1576, f. 143v^o–144.

⁵⁶ G. H. Janssen, "Exiles and the Politics of Reintegration in the Dutch Revolt," *History* 94:313 (2009): 40–41.

⁵⁷ Van Nierop, *Het foute Amsterdam*.

⁵⁸ See: J. ter Gouw, *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam*, 8 vols (Amsterdam, 1879), vol. 6, 208. See also: Stoffel Jansz, 3 February 1569, f. 238–238v^o; *Dagverhaal*, 23 July 1569, f. 11v^o.

⁵⁹ Deen, "'O Amsterdam Moordadich'": 179.

⁶⁰ Keurboek G, 6 May 1572, f. 62. 'Dat oick mijnene heeren vande gerechte onderrecht worden diet enighe der gemeente deser stede ende oick anderen vreempden dagelixs binnen deser stede ende die vrijheyt van dyer semineren, sayen, verspreyden

in the German town of Emden, the centre of the production of Protestant printed works for the Dutch market, would not have diminished this suspicion.⁶¹

Claes Overlander, a wealthy grain merchant who was arrested in March 1574, is a striking example of the strong connection between the exiles in Emden and the spread of dissident writings. Overlander was suspected of using his trade network in Emden as a cover for other, illegal contact with the Beggars, and of spreading dissident writings and songs.⁶² In Emden, the grain trade was flourishing after the settlement of a large number of exiles, many of whom were active in the grain trade. When the Baltic Fleet was attacked by the Sea Beggars in 1569, many grain merchants from Amsterdam willingly directed their business to Emden.⁶³ This required frequent contact between Emden and Amsterdam. Official messengers still travelled back and forth between the two cities, although the Amsterdam city government kept a close eye on this service.⁶⁴ Whether as a result of this watchfulness or not, a clandestine courier system between the two cities existed as well. Two letters written by an exile in Emden to his wife and son-in-law in Steenberg in 1571 mention an extensive network of messengers between Amsterdam and Emden. Jan Jansz Beverloo wrote to his family that they could send letters to him through Oudenbosch, in the county of Brabant. Every day three or four messengers passed through Oudenbosch on their way to and from Amsterdam and Emden. The letters were to be handed over to Lijncken, the innkeeper of The Moor's Head, who would give the letter to the first messenger passing.⁶⁵

ende vertellen vele quaide valsche tijdingen. Ibid., f. 62–62v°. Peter van Duyeren was banished in August 1566 for attacking burgomaster Hendrick Dircksz. Archief Schout en Schepenen, inv. no. 568, Justitieboeken 26 april 1566 – 21 May 1578 (hereafter: Justitieboek 568), f. 5v°–6, Confessieboek 274, f. 100, 103, 181v°.

⁶¹ A. Pettegree, *Emden and the Dutch Revolt. Exile and the Development of Reformed Protestantism* (Oxford/New York, 1992), 94–95.

⁶² Confessieboek 274, f. 94v°–95.

⁶³ Pettegree, *Emden and the Dutch Revolt*, 167–168, 92.

⁶⁴ One of these messengers was held by the sheriff during Orange's attempted siege of the Netherlands in 1568 and disposed of his letters. Later, the burgomasters gave him a sum of money for the delay this had caused him. SA, Stadsrekeningen, inv. nr. 36, 1568, f. 115v°–116.

⁶⁵ Unlike what might be expected, the letters to Beverloo had to be handed over to the messenger to Amsterdam, enclosed in another letter addressed to a certain Jan Cools, his son-in-law's brother. Beverloo also mentions three or four messengers traveling daily between Amsterdam and Antwerp, and between Antwerp and Emden. The transcribed letters in: J. van Vloten, *Nederlands opstand tegen Spanje, in zijn eerste*

It seems probable that Overlander used at least one of these courier systems for his own correspondence – and perhaps for receiving the numerous Beggar songs, newsletters and pamphlets that were found in his house. The sheriff displayed great interest in Overlander's correspondence with a certain Elbrich Cornelisdr, whom Overlander insisted was only his agent in Emden.⁶⁶ Overlander was also accused of corresponding with well-known Amsterdam exiles, accusations he denied fervently.⁶⁷ The sheriff did not believe him. In fact, he was convinced Overlander had a hand in the further dissemination of writings and songs in Amsterdam. During the interrogation, the sheriff showed Overlander a handwritten text and asked him if he recognised it. Overlander claimed never to have seen it before.⁶⁸

Exile letters

Although the exact nature of the correspondence between Overlander and Emden remains uncertain, it is clear that the exiles could use business contacts like these to contribute to the public debate in their hometown. Several letters have been found written by Amsterdam exiles to their former neighbours, families and friends, encouraging them to join the revolt. These appeals might simply have been heartfelt pleadings of people who desperately wanted to return to their city, but in several cases we can discern organised attempts to influence the Amsterdam populace. For this, they could depend on the public quality of letters, but they also employed other ways to make sure their messages were spread further.

A curious collection of letters, prompted by an intercepted note from one Spanish soldier to another, reveals such a tactic. In the

wording en ontwikkeling (1567–1572) (Haarlem, 1858), 267–272. The letters were intercepted near Breda and never reached Beverloo's wife.

⁶⁶ Confessieboek 274, f. 96–96v°, 104v°.

⁶⁷ He was connected by the sheriff to Adriaen int Cromhout, Philips du Gardyn, Claes Boelens and Herman Rodenburgh. The only thing Overlander admitted was that a merchant's apprentice, who was supposed to bring over a letter to Dantzig for Overlander, had given this letter to the well-known Amsterdam exile Herman Rodenburgh to deliver it further, without Overlander's consent.

⁶⁸ Overlander was banished for life and had to pay a fine of 1000 guilders in grain. Justitieboek 568, f. 168v°. In Amsterdam the story was told that Overlander received this punishment for writing a forbidden song about Orange: Stoffel Jansz, 27 April 1574, f. 273.

intercepted note, the author hinted that he and his regiment might be stationed in Amsterdam during the upcoming winter.⁶⁹ Two prominent exiles, Reinier van Neck and Alsten Jansz Blomert, sent the epistle to Amsterdam, accompanied by letters to several inhabitants of the city, warning them of the imminent threat. The fear of having the much-hated Spanish soldiers billeted on them was great, and the city government had earned the population's much-needed support by raising two civic regiments and allowing the population to defend their own city, thus preventing the presence of the Spanish troops.⁷⁰ The exiles suggested that the burgomasters wanted to break this agreement.

The recipient of the original letter was asked to translate it, and he should not hesitate to show the letters to friends, and even the burgomasters, or so the exiles wrote.⁷¹ At the same time, the two captains of the civic regiments received letters from Blomert in which they were alerted to the possible treason.⁷² The exile pointed out that the civic regiments would cease to exist if foreign troops were to come into the city. Two other burghers received letters from Reinier van Neck, in which they were advised to ask the burgomasters for clarification.⁷³ Yet another letter was sent to Jacob Jansz Hart by his brother Jan, an exile residing in Rotterdam. Jacob was urged to leave the city at once and bring his wife and children to safety.⁷⁴ All three letters urged the recipients to make their way to Pieter Cort, who had received the original letter, to see for themselves.⁷⁵

These were clear attempts to ensure the letter reached a larger audience. The burgomasters too were convinced the exiles were deliberately sowing unrest with this letter campaign. In a letter to the Stadtholder they wrote: "The rebels spread certain missives here in

⁶⁹ SA, Archief Burgemeesters, inv. no. 44, letter no. 74 (X.J. de Tablares to Don Manuel Cabeza, 31 October 1574). The translation was included.

⁷⁰ Van Nierop, *Het foute Amsterdam*.

⁷¹ SA, Archief Burgemeesters, inv. no. 44, letter no. 76 (Alsten Thomasz Blomert to Pieter Jansz Cort, 6 November 1574).

⁷² Ibid., letter no. 75 (Alsten Thomasz Blomert to Wouter Burchmansz, 6 November 1574); letter no. 80 (Alsten Thomasz Blomert to Wolf Michielsz, 8 November 1574).

⁷³ Ibid., letter no. 77 (Reinier van Neck to Floris Dircksz Otter, 6 November 1574); letter no. 78 (Reinier van Neck to Gerrit Claesz Groof in de Vier Heemskinderen, 6 November 1574).

⁷⁴ Ibid., letter no. 79 (Jan Jansz Hart to Jacob Jansz Hart, 7 November 1574).

⁷⁵ Possibly, more letters were sent. The ones that were saved were either handed over to the burgomasters or confiscated, and it seems likely not all letters met with this fate.

this city, to make commotion and revolt amongst the community”⁷⁶ The exiles themselves seemed to realise that their motives could be questioned. Time and again they stressed that, even though they had no reason to help the city that had turned them into exiles and killed so many of their fellow believers, they felt a Christian duty to their paternal city and relatives to warn them. This example shows how the rebels used the propagandistic potential of letters. This kind of campaign could be highly effective with relatively minor means and low costs. Unlike the ‘national’ campaigns, these letters were much better able to address local matters. The exiles knew the sensitivities in the city and could draw on their contacts.⁷⁷

The rebel authorities made use of the contacts and knowledge of the exiles as well. The two parties collaborated to make sure a larger audience was reached, as is shown in an episode that took place in December 1576 when the rebel States of Holland invited the city government of Amsterdam yet again to start peace negotiations. The invitation was brought over by a drummer, who also carried a letter for the civic guard, warning them of the existence of the first letter, in case the burgomasters would try to keep the invitation a secret.⁷⁸ Around the same time, yet another missive with a similar warning was written by three exiles to the Amsterdam burgher Barend Claesz op ‘t Water.⁷⁹ According to Wouter Jacobsz, many letters arrived in Amsterdam that day from the rebel cities, pressing the recipients (Catholic refugees and exiles from these towns) to come back, since the situation in the city would fast deteriorate. Many people fled as a result.⁸⁰

The two ‘official’ letters, plus a declaration made by the drummer who delivered them, were published in a printed pamphlet as well.

⁷⁶ SA, Archief burgemeesters, Minuutboek 48, f. 29–29v° (Burgomasters to Stadtholder, 18 November 1574).

⁷⁷ Hendrick Meyster wrote to his uncle, former burgomaster Joost Buijck, in October 1574 with a plea to close the gates against the Spaniards. SA, Archief Burgemeesters, inv. no. 44, letter no. 71 (Hendrick Meyster to Joost Buijck, 11 October 1574). See also *ibid.*, letter no. 85 (Jan Smit to Evert Claesz, 5 November 1576). The famous Sea Beggar Ruychaver wrote to his brother with an appeal to Amsterdam to join the Revolt and an offer to mediate: Noord-Hollands Archief, Archief Ruychaver, inv. no. 82 (Nicolaes Ruychaver to his brother, appr. 1574).

⁷⁸ SA, Archief Vroedschap, Resoluties, inv. no. 3, 22 December 1576, f. 55v°–56.

⁷⁹ SA, Archief Burgemeesters, inv. no. 44, letter no. 86 (Clement Volckertsz Coornhert, Hendrik van Marcken and Thijmen Meynertsz to Barend Claesz op ‘t Water, 19 December 1576).

⁸⁰ *Dagboek van broeder Wouter Jacobsz*, 17 December 1576, 622.

The drummer stated that the burgomasters had prevented him from entering the city and from handing over the second letter to the captains of the guard.⁸¹ The published pamphlet might have been meant for the Amsterdam public, so that they could take note of the invitation after all. However, it is equally possible that the pamphlet was spread amongst the inhabitants of the rebel provinces. In that case, it would have served the goal of showing the inhabitants, whose support was vital, that Orange was the sole pursuer of concord and unity. He was the one reaching out time and again to an unwilling and stubborn Amsterdam.

A direct appeal to the inhabitants could thus be followed by a printed pamphlet. The printed copy could both target the Amsterdam populace and at the same time function as an encouragement for the people already under rebel rule. A letter from Louis de Boisot, written directly after the Relief of Leiden, is another example of this practice. Boisot played a decisive role in the Relief of Leiden and was newly appointed admiral, and in his letter he insisted on Amsterdam abandoning its resistance.⁸² Four hundred copies of the appeal, and a similar one for the city of Utrecht, were printed and spread in the hope “that it would bear fruit”.⁸³

Conclusion

Orange and the rebels make great efforts to reach and influence the public debate in Amsterdam, a city they were desperate to control. Hitherto, studies of William of Orange’s propaganda campaign have focused mainly on his clever use of printed media like pamphlets, prints and songs. However, by comparing the content and dissemination of handwritten letters and pamphlets issued by the rebels, it becomes apparent that they used both media interchangeably as vehicles for their propaganda messages. Both were intended for a wider

⁸¹ *Sendtbrieven bijde Ridderschappen, Edelen, Representerde den Staten vanden selven Lande, laestgheschreven ende ghesonden aenden Burghermeesteren (...) van Amsterdam. Mitsgaders aen die vander Schutterije der selver Stede* (1576) Knuttel 277.

⁸² SA, Archief Burgemeesters, inv no. 44, letter no. 68 (Louis de Boisot to those of Amsterdam, 5 October 1574).

⁸³ The printed copies can be found in the pamphlet collection of the University of Leiden: Petit 182 (to Amsterdam) and Petit 183 (to Utrecht). See for a transcript of the entry for the printing assignment in the Leiden account book (1572–1574): *De Navorscher* (1864): 296.

public and were meant to influence this audience. In both cases, numerous copies were spread. Copies of letters were printed: During the first decade of the Revolt, a considerable portion of the pamphlets consisted of letters and appeals. But pamphlets were copied by hand as well.

The fact remains that printing made large quantities of a message simultaneously available to a broad audience. In some cases however, handwritten letters had clear advantages over print. Correspondence defied censorship, was cheaper and more accessible than print. When the intended audience was clearly identified, like a city's population, manuscript letters had the added advantage of being able to address local issues without 'losing' part of the audience. Here, the rebels collaborated with the exiles, who were deeply motivated to get the city on the side of the rebels and were aware of local sentiments and connections. To distribute their writings they used existing channels of communication and personal contacts. In addition to local issues, these writings were also drenched in the more universal propaganda themes like the defence of privileges and the necessity of concord and unity.

The exact nature of the collaboration between the exiles and Orange in shaping the propaganda campaign largely remains a mystery.⁸⁴ It has become clear, however, that letters should be regarded as being one of the most important propaganda tools used in the early stage of the Dutch Revolt. To understand the complete scope of the propaganda campaign and the full dynamic of the public debate, letters have to be studied alongside other media, printed, oral and visual.

⁸⁴ But see: Janssen, "Exiles and the Politics of Reintegration".

PEACE OR NO PEACE? THE ROLE OF PAMPHLETEERING
IN PUBLIC DEBATE IN THE RUN-UP TO THE
TWELVE-YEAR TRUCE¹

Monica Stensland

Introduction

On 9 April 1609, in the Antwerp town hall, 42 years of armed conflict in the Low Countries officially came to a halt. In the presence of mediators from England and France, a twelve-year truce was signed by representatives of the Dutch Republic, on the one hand, and of King Philip III of Spain and Archdukes Albert and Isabella of the Spanish Low Countries, on the other.

The treaty meant that the Habsburg regime agreed to treat the rebel Northern provinces ‘as though’ they were an independent country on which the Habsburgs had no claim.² Freedom of movement between the two halves of the Low Countries was restored, as was commercial activity.³ But in return for their *de facto* recognition of the rebel provinces, the Habsburg side reaped very little reward beyond the desperately hoped-for end to warfare. There had been no agreement on either Dutch trade in the Indies, the religious rights of Catholics living in the Republic, or the continued blockade of the Scheldt. Indeed, the disagreements on these issues had been so overwhelming that what had first been intended as a negotiated permanent peace in the end had to be reduced to a mere truce.⁴

The peace negotiations’ rocky ride had been accompanied by an ongoing public debate in both the Dutch Republic and the Habsburg

¹ I am grateful to the Fondation Wiener-Anspach at the Université libre de Bruxelles for funding much of the research that this article is based on, as well as to the editors for their helpful comments and great patience.

² Cf. Article 1 of the treaty, *Articles du traité de trefve faict et conclv en la ville et cité d’Anvers, le nefiesme d’Auril 1609* (1609), A2r^o.

³ Ibid.

⁴ P.C. Allen, *Philip III and the Pax Hispanica, 1598–1621. The Failure of Grand Strategy* (New Haven, 2000), 220.

lands.⁵ Indeed, Craig Harline suggests in what is the only major quantitative study of Dutch Revolt pamphleteering, that it was largely due to the controversy occasioned by the different peace initiatives that the number of different pamphlets published on an annual basis in the Republic soared around 1607.⁶ Harline's argument is based on the assumption that the number of pamphlets surviving from any given year is proportional to what was actually published and, more problematically, that each and every title published has run the same risk of becoming extinct regardless of what its message was. This may be a wobbly foundation for scholarly arguments, but given that we cannot know how many and what type of publications have been lost precisely because they are no longer there for us to look at, it is difficult to know how to nuance such fundamental assumptions.

What Harline's analysis does make abundantly clear, however, is the difficulty of determining numbers of pamphlet titles with any degree of certainty. The difficulty only becomes worse when we add a consideration of what it is that we want to count, namely pamphlets. Quite apart from how to deal with multiple (sometimes revised) editions of the same title, it is not even self-evident which types of publication actually belong in the pamphlet category in the first place. Joost Vrieler's overview of pamphlet definitions shows just how conflicting some of the approaches have been, for instance in relation to whether a pamphlet is defined by its physical characteristics (number of pages, type of binding) or content (genre, language, message).⁷ Jeroen Salman, for instance, has identified a pamphlet as a publication that does not address itself only to a pre-defined social or professional audience, that can include both fiction and non-fiction, that is published in the popular tongue, that is produced with low cost and therefore in large numbers, and whose contents are meant for a broad public.⁸ Interestingly, these criteria also fit the printed edict, a genre not generally included in pamphlet studies.⁹ For the purposes of this article, I have adopted

⁵ 'Public debate' refers to the public expression of opinion(s) of different groups, and not the expression of the public opinion such as it may have been. For a discussion of this distinction, see F. Deen, "'O Amsterdam Moordadich'. Geuzenliederen in Amsterdam, 1566–1578," *Historisch Tijdschrift Holland* 40:3 (2008): 173.

⁶ Cf. C.E. Harline, *Pamphlets, Printing, and Political Culture in the Early Dutch Republic* (Dordrecht, 1987), 3–4, 8.

⁷ J.A. Vrieler, *Het poëtisch accent. Drie literaire genres in zeventiende-eeuwse Nederlandse pamfletten* (Hilversum, 2007), 13–18.

⁸ Cf. discussion in *ibid.*, 15.

⁹ One exception is V. van Zuilen, "Propagande royale. Les placards de Philippe II en Flandres et au Brabant (1585–1598)," in *Les écrits courts à vocation polémique*, ed.

Vrieler's own definition, namely that a pamphlet is a printed, non-periodical medium that is related to current affairs, that can contain any form of fiction or non-fiction, and that tries to persuade its reader of a certain point of view.¹⁰ Again, this means that genres often not considered as pamphlets, such as printed edicts, songs and newsletters, can and should be included in discussions as these were often intended to sway their readers' opinions in a particular direction.¹¹

The aim of this article is to use evidence of the public debate relating to the Truce as a window on the function of pamphlets in political debates and decision-making. Numerous studies of pamphlets as political tools exist, with reference to both the Dutch Republic and other early modern European countries.¹² What has been less commonly done is to compare pamphlets with other media, and this article will seek to highlight how pamphleteering functioned in relation to a variety of other media that could also be used to influence opinion.¹³ This kind of multimedia approach is important because although literacy rates in the Low Countries appear to have been outstandingly high compared to the rest of early modern Europe, the ability to read was by no means universal. Different oral media remained an important, if not the most important, form of communication.¹⁴ To rely only

B. Ertlé and M. Gosman (Frankfurt am Main, 2006). For a characterisation of edicts, see 115ff.

¹⁰ Vrieler, *Het poëtisch accent*, 18.

¹¹ For a discussion of the persuasive elements at work in edicts, see Van Zuilen, "Propagande royale": 115. One wonders whether the relatively infrequent study of edicts in communication studies related to the Dutch Revolt may have something to do with their absence from the Knuttel collection. Greater use of the collections in Ghent, Brussels and Antwerp, where edicts and other pamphlets are listed together in the same catalogues, may make the similarities between the genres and the sheer presence of edicts on the print market easier to appreciate.

¹² See, among others, Harline, *Pamphlets*; P.A.M. Geurts, *De Nederlandse Opstand in de pamfletten 1566–1584* (Nijmegen, 1956); M.U. Edwards Jr., *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther* (Berkeley, 1994); J.K. Sawyer, *Printed Poison. Pamphlet Propaganda, Faction Politics, and the Public Sphere in Early Seventeenth-Century France* (Berkeley, 1990).

¹³ Exceptions include A. Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion* (Cambridge, 2005); C.M. Klinkert, *Nassau in het nieuws. nieuwsprenten van Maurits van Nassaus militaire ondernemingen uit de periode 1590–1600* (Zutphen, 2005); A.C. Duke, "Posters, Pamphlets and Prints. The Ways of Disseminating Dissident Opinions on the Eve of the Dutch Revolt," *Dutch Crossing* 27:1 (2003); P. Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots. The Political Culture of the Dutch Revolt* (Ithaca, 2008).

¹⁴ For discussions of literacy, see Harline, *Pamphlets*, 59–62; G. Marnef, *Antwerp in the Age of Reformation. Underground Protestantism in a Commercial Metropolis 1550–1577* (Baltimore, 1996), 33–37. For a discussion of the importance of oral communication, see H. van Nierop, "And ye shall hear of Wars and Rumours of Wars. Rumour and the Revolt of the Netherlands," in *Public Opinion and Changing Identities in the*

on pamphlets risks exaggerating the relative strength and impact of messages that were communicated in print, and also oversimplifies the communication practices that people were exposed to.

To further nuance and enrich our views on pamphlets, the communication practices at work in the Republic will be compared with those of the Habsburg Low Countries. 'Communication practices' refers to the overall communicative tradition at work in the public arena. Because Habsburg communication practices differed from those at work in the Republic, comparisons between the two allow us to see, in clearer relief, the dynamics at work both between different media and between media and political decision-making. Aspects of, say, pamphleteering in the Republic that we might take for granted may turn out to be anything but obvious when we compare them with how pamphleteering worked in the Habsburg provinces, and vice-versa.

Pamphleteering: form and content

Perhaps the most striking difference between pamphleteering in the Republic and the Habsburg provinces in the period leading up to the Truce was the opposing positions the two sides took on the prospect of peace. Whereas Republican pamphleteers were overwhelmingly against a peace deal, their counterparts in the south were all in favour. In the Habsburg lands, the calls for peace, and the expectation that Albert and Isabella could deliver it, were especially prominent in the panegyrics of 1599 and 1600, the first two years of the Archdukes' reign. This was not a new theme: The ability to obtain peace had been presented as a "ruler's virtue" upon the arrival of Archduke Ernest as governor-general in 1594, and again when Albert was appointed his successor two years later.¹⁵

Early Modern Netherlands. Essays in Honour of Alastair Duke, ed. J. Pollmann and A. Spicer (Leiden, 2006).

¹⁵ Cf. *Den willecomme en congratlatie vanden hooghgheboren, machtighen, ende seer doorluchtighen Vorst Ernesto* (1594) BT 1534; L. de Meyere, *Prosopopee d'Anvers à la bien-venve dv serenissime Prince Erneste par la grace de Dieu Archidvc d'Avstriche, Duc de Bourgoigne, &c. Cheualier de la toison d'Or; Lieutenant, Gouverneur & Capitaine General des Pais-Bas* (1594) BT 2122; *Een Schoon Dialogus oft t'samen-sprekinghe / tusschen Belgica ende hope tot Peys / tracterende ter eeren van den hooghgheboren doorluchtighen Vorst Ernesto* (1594) Knuttel 915; *Relation de ce qve s'est exhibé en la ville de Brvxelles, à l'entree dv serenissime Prince, Albert, Archidvc d'Austrice, &c. Cardinal, Archeuesque de Toledé, & Gouverneur general pour sa Ma^{te}. Catholique des pays bas & de Bourgoigne, l'vnsiesme iour de Feburier, 1596* (1596) BT 4121.

But the peace that was portrayed in these pamphlets was overwhelmingly idealised. There was no mention of the need to negotiate and pursue a 'give and take' strategy, and instead it was a triumphal peace that was called for. The Archdukes, "the true eagles of Austria", would repeat the heroism of their Habsburg ancestors and defend the Catholic Church, root out all heresy and in this way restore peace and prosperity in the Low Countries.¹⁶ Even when the sheer goodness shown by the Archdukes to their rebel subjects was stressed, this did not imply that they would agree to a division of the Low Countries and refrain from insisting on total sovereignty for themselves. On the contrary, it was clemency in return for total submission that they were portrayed as offering, even though this was far from a true reflection of the Archdukes' willingness to grant far-reaching concessions.¹⁷

In contrast, pamphleteers in the Republic expressed little enthusiasm for a peace deal. Here, peace did not become a prominent topic of discussion until 1606, although the annual peace overtures that were made by the Habsburg side had occasioned negative reactions in print before that.¹⁸ But all the negative pamphleteering in the Republic should not lead us to believe that peace was not widely wanted. When Johan van Oldenbarnevelt insisted in August 1606 that the Republic could no longer finance its own war effort, the States of Holland preferred to engage in peace negotiations rather than seek the help of a foreign monarch.¹⁹ This was a choice that was forced on the Holland assembly by the prospect of an even more unpleasant alternative, but the land-lying provinces of the Republic were far more actively supportive of a peace deal. These found themselves in the firing line far more often than the coastal provinces and did not reap much benefit from maritime trade. Instead they found that their main source of prosperity, agriculture, was constantly at risk from military onslaughts.²⁰

¹⁶ *Discovrs, en favevr de lalliance, et celebre entrée des Alteses Serenissimes Archeducq d'Austriche, Ducq de Bourgoigne, de Brabant, de Lembourg, & de Luxembourg, &c. en la noble ville de Bruxelles* (1599) BT 913, especially A2r^o, A4v^o.

¹⁷ *Complaincte et doléance de la paix, contre les XVII. Prouvinces du Pays-bas, auecq requisitio[n] du rappel de son bannissement[n]t tortionnaire, & iouissance de son retour esdicts Pays* (1600) BT 679, B3v^o–4r^o; Allen, *Philip III and the Pax Hispanica*, 221.

¹⁸ *Eene Trouwertighe vermaninghe aen het Vereenichde Nederlandt, Om niet te luys-teren na eenige ghestroyde ende versierde vreed-Articulen* (1605) Wulp 1023.

¹⁹ J. den Tex, *Johan van Oldenbarnevelt* (The Hague, 1980), 145.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 147; R. Kaper, *Pamfletten over oorlog of vrede. Reakties van tijdgenoten op de vredesonderhandelingen van 1607–1609* (Amsterdam, 1980), 13.

But such arguments in favour of peace did not find their way into pamphlets. Similarly, although perhaps more surprisingly, pro-peace arguments were largely absent in Habsburg pamphleteering as well, even though general calls for peace were common. There were no attempts to provide actual arguments in favour; peace was quite simply presented as an axiomatic common good, as in a poem envisaging Albert chasing away the civil war monster, and thus allowing Peace and her two close friends Religion and Justice to return.²¹ Detailed arguments in favour of peace may not have been in evidence, but nor was any argumentation against an end to the war. Why did peace occasion so little actual debate in the Habsburg provinces?

The major reason appears to have been an absence of strong interest groups that were able to profit from the ongoing conflict. Trade had plummeted and infrastructure had been destroyed as a result of blockades, mass emigration and hordes of troops constantly on the move. Agricultural productivity also continued to suffer as both peasants and their harvests found themselves at the mercy of passing troops and brigands who took advantage of the general lack of law and order caused by the war.²² In a situation where no one saw any good coming out of continued warfare, there was no interest in championing a pro-war cause in print either. The absence of detailed discussion of the peace proposals and the consequences of an end to conflict in pro-peace Habsburg pamphleteering, also suggests that there was no need to engage in detailed persuasion at all. Both the authorities and the general public had been sufficiently persuaded by their own war time experiences not to need further proof to support a pro-peace line of action.

Certainly, any attempt to argue against the peace negotiations in print may also have had difficulty getting past the Habsburg censorship apparatus, which aimed to ensure that manuscripts were approved by both secular and ecclesiastical authorities before publication.

²¹ L. de Meyere, *Poème: Advis pour la paix de la Belgique* (1598) Knuttel 1026, A3r^o–A4v^o, D3r^o–v^o. See also *Discovrs, en favevr de l'alliance*, BT913, A4r^o; *Beclach, Van die van Hollant en Zeelandt* (1598) BT 282, A2r^o–A3r^o.

²² Cf. *Chanson novvelle povr rendre action de graces au bon Dieu* (1598) Knuttel 1010; *La valerevse expugnation des Ville & Chasteau de Dourlens en Picardie, faicte par les ge[n]s du Roy nostre Sire, le dernier de Juillet 1595* (1595) A2r^o; J. Massarette, *La vie martiale et fastueuse de Pierre-Ernest de Mansfeld*, 2 vols (Paris, 1930), vol. 2, 103. For an analysis of the economic difficulties of the years preceding the Archdukes' arrival, see C. Verlinden and J. Craeybeckx, *Prijzen- en Lonenpolitiek in de Nederlanden in 1561 en 1588–1589. Onuitgegeven adviezen, ontwerpen en ordonnanties* (Brussels, 1962), 24.

Operations were not centralised and effective censorship relied on the conscientious work of individual censors, a situation that meant the system had obvious loopholes. However, printers enjoyed economic advantages in return for playing by the rules as they were given the sole right to publish any approved work presented for publication. Censors, although happy to accept gifts from their printer clients, probably also took their job seriously. Both clergy and Catholic magistrates had often themselves been victims during the period of Calvinist rule in the 1580s and were unlikely to want to undermine the Habsburg regime's chance of success.²³ The censors' undoubted pro-Archduke attitudes, then, coupled with the absence of strong groups interested in prolonging the war, were probably reason enough why there was no controversy in print regarding a possible peace in the southern Low Countries. The absence of such controversy in turn meant that there was nothing to spur pamphleteers into presenting detailed arguments for why precisely peace was such a good idea, and so we are faced with general calls for peace rather than detailed arguments.

The lack of controversy probably also contributed to a smaller pamphlet output, which in turn makes the identity of their authors difficult to determine as there are few clues available. Prior to the arrival of the Archdukes, political pamphleteering in the Habsburg lands had been conducted at least in part by men closely connected to the regime. Pamphlets with a regime connection had almost always been written in French and had often included numerous letters to persuade the public of the regime's goodness and credibility, as during Alexander Farnese's reconciliation campaign in the 1580s.²⁴ Under the Archdukes, this practice disappeared. Gone were the 'leaked' letters that were meant to prove the regime's credibility, and instead we have Dutch language diatribes focusing on the heretical ways of the Northerners rather than the many starts and stops in the peace negotiations. Several of these pamphlets have been attributed to a few named clergymen, notably Franciscus Costerus and Johannes David, and it may be that

²³ Cf. L. Voet, *The Golden Compasses. A History and Evaluation of the Printing and Publishing Activities of the Officina Plantiniana at Antwerp in two volumes* (Amsterdam, 1972), vol. 1, *The Management of a Printing and Publishing House in Renaissance and Baroque*, 255–258, 272. For the transfer from Calvinist to Catholic rule, see M.J. Marinus, *De contrareformatie te Antwerpen (1585–1676). Kerkelijk leven in een grootsstad* (Brussels, 1995), e.g. 51, 273.

²⁴ M. Stensland, "Habsburg Communication in the Dutch Revolt, 1567–1609" (D.Phil. thesis, Oxford University, 2008), chapters 3–5.

the Archdukes refrained from anonymous pamphleteering altogether. Certainly, whereas their predecessors who had used the press to improve the regime's credentials and persuade the public that the Habsburg way was the right way, had been forced into using such techniques by the risk of renewed rebellion, the Archdukes could rest relatively assured that their subjects were on their side. After all, most of those who did not want to live under Habsburg rule had already left the country, and peace was a goal uniting the whole of southern Low Countries society. It appears more likely, then, that they did not feel the same need as their predecessors to engage in communication in print, rather than that they involved themselves in changing the nature of pro-Habsburg pamphleteering in this period.

In the Republic, the scenario was altogether different. Here, there were well-defined groups with strong interests in the continuation of the war. Stadtholders Maurice and William Louis had made their names as generals in the Republic's army, the province of Zeeland and the city of Amsterdam owed an increase in trade and prosperity partly to the continued blockade of Antwerp, and merchants with a stake in the trade with the Indies did not want to have their lucrative investments sacrificed on a negotiation table.²⁵

In light of these powerful anti-peace interest groups, it is surprisingly difficult to determine the identity of the anti-peace pamphleteers as they all published their works anonymously. Nevertheless, there is reason to suspect that the authors themselves either belonged to, or were closely connected with, the powerful groups whose anti-peace views they championed in print. Although there are no pamphlets that can be pinned on Maurice personally, for instance, it is striking to see how closely the open letters he sent to the magistracies of different Holland towns in the autumn of 1608 compare with anonymously published pamphlets. In his letters, Maurice argued that it had always been a fundamental principle in the Republic not to treat with the enemy, and that to do so would be to risk the country's safety. It might even lead to the restoration of Spanish tyranny.²⁶ The same emphasis

²⁵ Cf. J.I. Israel, *The Dutch Republic and the Hispanic World 1606–1661* (Oxford, 1982), 30–31; Kaper, *Pamfletten over oorlog of vrede*, 8.

²⁶ *Missiue van sijn Princelijck Exelentie Graeff Mauric de Nassau Gouverneur ende Cap^{ne} Generael ouer de gheunierde Prouintie, Gesonden aende Steede vande voorsz prouintie* (1608) Knuttel 1549; J.I. Israel, *The Dutch Republic. Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall 1477–1806* (Oxford, 1995), 404; Israel, *The Dutch Republic and the Hispanic World*, 32; Kaper, *Pamfletten over oorlog of vrede*, 34.

was at work in a number of pamphlets, where the conclusion of peace was portrayed as the first step towards total ruin. Peace would give more room for internal discord that would destroy the Republic, and demobilisation would allow the Spanish to launch a surprise attack with terrifying success.²⁷

Although the similarities between the arguments voiced in the pamphlets and letters do not necessarily mean that Maurice penned them himself, they do at least make it more likely that the pamphleteer was someone who either collaborated or strongly sympathised with the Stadtholder. When we also consider that Maurice in this period began mixing closely with preachers, something he had not done before, this appears all the more probable.²⁸ Preachers could of course promote Maurice's anti-peace viewpoints from the pulpit, but we also know that, as a group, they were becoming the most active pamphlet authors of the period.²⁹ Although Maurice's precise motivation in choosing his new allies cannot be determined, if it was a desire to spread his anti-peace arguments to a larger audience that drove him, then befriending preachers was a very shrewd choice indeed.

Similarly, it appears that different economic interest groups also made sure their arguments against peace negotiations circulated in print. Stakeholders in the Dutch East India Company (VOC) were particularly vocal in their opposition to the negotiations. Established in 1602, the VOC aimed to acquire a monopoly on the spice trade with the East Indies at the expense of the already existing Spanish and Portuguese presence in that region.³⁰ In the event of peace, the VOC feared that the Habsburg interests would be upheld while they themselves would be forced to refrain from the lucrative practice of piracy and confiscation.³¹ Indeed, the Spanish had already demanded that plans for a West India company be permanently shelved in order to protect their own monopoly. In defence of its cause, the VOC presented several petitions to the States of Holland and Zeeland, echoing its founding charter which stressed that the VOC's purpose was not

²⁷ *Consideratien vande Vrede in Nederlandt gheconcipteert* (1608) Knuttel 1447, A1v^o–2r^o; *Argyment van een tragische-comedie prophetique, gherepresenteert tvoorleden iaer in Syria, voor la Bacsa de Tripoly* (1608) Knuttel 1501, A4v^o; *Discours op den swermenden Treves* (1609) Knuttel 1576, A4r^o, B1v^o, B3r^o.

²⁸ Cf. Den Tex, *Oldenbarnevelt*, 158.

²⁹ Harline, *Pamphlets*, 102, 134.

³⁰ Kaper, *Pamfletten over oorlog of vrede*, 53.

³¹ *Ibid.*

just to enable all subjects of “these United Provinces” to invest in the East India traffic, but also to attack the power, prestige, and revenues of Spain and Portugal in Asia.³² This line of argument was echoed in pamphlets where the VOC was presented as crucial to the very survival of the Republic.³³ As more than one pamphleteer argued: If the Spanish could be prevented from trading with the Indies, then they would lose the linchpin that held their war effort together.³⁴

Although the authors remained anonymous, one of them has been identified as Willem Usselinx and his connections may throw light on a broader pattern. We have already seen the similarities between the VOC’s petitions and the anonymous pamphlets arguing the VOC’s case. Usselinx was himself a leading supporter of the plans for a Dutch West India company and would become one of its founding fathers in 1621. It is therefore not surprising to find that his own pamphlets devoted a lot of attention to the importance of overseas trade.³⁵ Although his pamphlets also reflected a more personal agenda for the Republic’s liberation of the Habsburg provinces, his direct connections with the VOC suggests the Company and its members more generally may themselves have made active use of pamphlets to argue against peace in defence of their own economic interests.

Perhaps more curious than the involvement of VOC supporters in pamphleteering is the absence of the European traders’ arguments.

³² Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 403; J.I. Israel, *Dutch Primacy in World Trade 1585–1740* (Oxford, 1989), 71.

³³ *Consideratien vande Vrede in Nederlandt gheconcipteert*, Knuttel 1447, A2r^o; *Le plaidoyer de l’indien hollandois, contre le pretendv pacificatevr espagnol* (1608) Wulp 1100, A3v^o. For an overview, see Kaper, *Pamfletten over oorlog of vrede*, 57–59.

³⁴ *Dialogve auquel se represente, ce qu’on doit croire de la presentation de la pais, quæ le Roi d’Espagne offre aux Province vniës. A tous vrais fideles Catholiques, amateurs de la verité* (1608) Van Someren 525, 8; *Naerder Bedenckingen, Over de zee-vaert / Coophandel ende Neeringhe / als mede de versekeringhe vanden Staet deser vereenichde Landen / inde teghenwoordighe Vrede-handelinghe met den Coninck van Spangnien ende de Aerts-hertoghen* (1608) Van Someren 524, A2v^o–A3r^o; E1r. See also *Den Nederlandtschen Bye-corf* (1608) A2r^o.

³⁵ See for instance the following probable Usselinx publications: *Naerder Bedenckingen*, Van Someren 524; *Memorie vande gewichtige redenen die de Heeren Staten generael behooren te bewegen om gheensins te wijcken vande handelinge ende vaert van Indien* (1608) Knuttel 1431; *Discovrs by forme van remonstrantie: Vervatende de noodsaeclickheyd vande Oost-Indische navigatie* (1608) Knuttel 1428; *Vertoogh, hoe nootwendich, nut ende profijtelyck het sy voor de vereenighde Nederlanden te behouden de vryheyt van te handelen op West-Indien, inden vrede metten coninck van Spaignen* (1608) Knuttel 1442. For a list of publications probably authored by Usselinx, see *Biographisch woordenboek der Nederlanden*, vol. 18, ed. A.J. van der Aa (1874), 29.

The European trade (*Europavaart*) concerned two different shipping routes: One to the Baltic Sea and Scandinavia and one to the Iberian Peninsula. From the north, Dutch ships transported grain and timber to Spain and Portugal and returned with salt, an essential ingredient in the Republic's herring industry.³⁶ But since the accession of Philip III in 1598, this lucrative business had been upset by the Spanish king's decision, on two occasions, to impose a hard-hitting trade embargo on the Republic.³⁷ As a result, Dutch ships were no longer allowed in Iberian ports, nor were goods that at any point had been transported on Dutch ships. They were also barred from entering the Mediterranean through the Straits of Gibraltar. Whereas a great Spanish need for Baltic grain had previously made Philip II refrain from embargoes, the decision to allow friendly or neutral countries to trade freely with the Iberian Peninsula in early 1603 meant that Spanish needs could be met without lining 'rebel' pockets.³⁸

The absence of discussions focusing on the importance of peace to the *Europavaart* is curious. Jonathan Israel has pointed out that the bulk-trade in low-cost commodities which formed the bedrock of the *Europavaart* was less lucrative than is often supposed.³⁹ Unlike the rich trades, which required big investments, bulk shipping was based on smaller, but far more numerous, investors and the profits were also smaller. But, unlike the luxury trade that focused on Africa and the Indies and which depended on fewer, already very rich investors, these profits reached a larger segment of society more directly.⁴⁰ In addition, from the 1590s onwards, there was growing involvement in the European luxury trades too, thus making the *Europavaart* important for both small and large investors.⁴¹ Indeed, proving not just the general importance of the *Europavaart* but also the benefits of peace, the registers of the Danish Sound show that once the ceasefire of April 1607 came into effect, Dutch traffic through the Sound increased significantly.⁴²

But pamphleteers continued to ignore such pro-peace arguments and proclaimed the trade with the Indies to be the backbone of the

³⁶ Kaper, *Pamfletten over oorlog of vrede*, 16.

³⁷ Ibid., 17; Israel, *Dutch Primacy in World Trade*, 56–58.

³⁸ Allen, *Philip III and the Pax Hispanica*, 103.

³⁹ Israel, *Dutch Primacy in World Trade*, 10, 27, 48–49.

⁴⁰ Cf. Ibid., 27.

⁴¹ Cf. Ibid., 49–51.

⁴² Kaper, *Pamfletten over oorlog of vrede*, 16.

Republic's prosperity.⁴³ If they mentioned the *Europavaart* at all, it was to belittle its importance rather than to discuss the beneficial economic consequences of peace. Exactly as in the VOC's petitions, pamphleteers rated the *Europavaart* far below the trade with the Indies, even though investments in the VOC were far riskier: In 1607 the company had to take out big loans and had even been rescued by the States' own warships on several occasions.⁴⁴ Despite these difficulties, the VOC managed to portray itself as a strong anti-Spanish asset vital to the safeguarding of the Republic's freedom. Once debate was framed on this ideological platform, as established by the VOC's founding charter, and away from hard economic realities, stakeholders in the trade with the enemy, be it ever so lucrative, were left with very little argumentative ammunition.⁴⁵

The heavy ideological argumentation against peace with Spain that was relied on in so many of the pamphlets may also have prevented other pro-peace voices from promoting their own arguments in print. Indeed, although pamphlets in theory were a relatively democratic medium, to be used by anyone willing and able to express themselves in print, the anti-peace arguments suggest that pamphleteering had instead largely been taken over by elite groups, such as rich investors, preachers and high officials. It is also telling that Ronnie Kaper's study of the pamphleteering accompanying the peace negotiations refers only to memoirs and archival records of discussions in the States General and the provincial states when detailing the arguments of those in favour of peace.⁴⁶ Financial arguments, strongly supportive of peace and of great importance to local town authorities who were having difficulty imposing more and higher taxes, did not find their way into pamphlets.⁴⁷ Instead, anti-peace pamphleteers insisted there was enough money, it just had to be spent properly.⁴⁸ The calls for peace

⁴³ *Le plaidoyer de l'Indien Hollandois*, Wulp 1100, A3v^o; *Buyr-praetjen: Ofte Tsamensprekinge ende Discovrs, op den Brief vanden Agent Aerssens uyt Vranckrijck, aende Eedele Moghende Heeren Staten Ghenerael geschreven* (1608) Knuttel 1525, A3v^o; *Memorie vande ghewichtige redenen die de heeren Staten Generael behooren te beweghen, om gheensins te wijcken vande handelinghe ende vaert van Indien* (1608) Knuttel 1433, A1v^o–2r^o.

⁴⁴ *Consideration vande Vrede in Nederlandt gheconcipteert*, Knuttel 1447, A2r^o; *Buyr-praetjen*, Knuttel 1525, A3v^o.

⁴⁵ Cf. Kaper, *Pamfletten over oorlog of vrede*, 17.

⁴⁶ See *ibid.*, 21, 32–33, 35–36, 47.

⁴⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 12, 18.

⁴⁸ *Discours op den swermenden Treves*, Knuttel 1576, A4v^o–B1r^o; *Naerder bedenckingen, over de zee-vaerdt, coophandel ende neeringhe, als mede de versekeringhe*

that did find their way into print in the Republic were similar to those published in the Habsburg lands in that they refrained from detailed, factual discussions of possible consequences and instead focused on the sufferings caused by war and the great general good that would come of peace.⁴⁹

But ideologically inspired arguments were not the only ones that made the propagation of pro-peace attitudes in pamphlet form difficult. A far more general tendency, at work in virtually all anti-peace pamphlets, was the accusation that the Habsburgs' real motives for peace were deceitful. Several pamphleteers drew on the already well established 'black legend' and argued that the Habsburg peace overtures were nothing but a ruse: The Spanish king had realised that brute force was not enough to conquer the Republic and was instead trying to trick them with fair words.⁵⁰ The Spanish king was nothing but a wolf in sheep's clothing, and if the Republic consented to peace they would just be giving him the breathing space he needed in order to come and get them later.⁵¹ One pamphlet described the Habsburgs as deceitful snakes: "Do not trust the word of the wicked / Their pointy tongue is split in two".⁵²

The most commonly cited evidence for such evil Habsburg intentions were readily available examples of Spanish atrocities from recent history. Never had peace been negotiated except to the detriment of the Republic and in an effort to deceive them.⁵³ One pamphlet was a reprint of one first published in 1568, alleging that the whole population of the Low Countries had been judged guilty of *lèse-majesté* and

vanden staet deser vereenichde Landen, inde teghenwoordighe vrede-handelinghe met den coninck van Spangnien ende de aerts-hertoghen (1608) Knuttel 1441, E1v^o.

⁴⁹ *Trovhertich vermaen eens ware yeverige Hollanders opt stvck vande vrede-handelinghe* (1607); *Boeren-litanie Ofte Klachte der Kempensche Landt-lieden / over de ellenden van deze lanck-duerighe Nederlandtsche Oorlooghe* (1608).

⁵⁰ For discussions of the development of the black legend, see A. Sawyer, "The Tyranny of Alva. The creation and development of a Dutch patriotic image," *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 19:2 (2003); J. Pollmann and M. Stensland, "Alva's Reputation in the Early Modern Low Countries," in *Fernando Alvarez de Toledo, Third Duke of Alva, 1507–1582*, ed. M.A. Hebben and R.H.A.M. Baron van Hövell tot Westerflïer (forthcoming).

⁵¹ *Dialogue, auquel se represente, ce qu'on doit croire de la presentation de la pais*, Van Someren 525, 9, 11. See also *Nootelijcke Consideratien die alle geode Liefhebbers des Vaderlands behooren rijpelijk te overweghen / opten voorgheslaghen Tractate van Peys met den Spagniaerden* (1608) A3v^o.

⁵² *Advīs familiers, Proposez par vn Zelateur de la prosperité des Pais-bas* (1608) Wulp 1099, 6v^o.

⁵³ *Discours op den swermenden Treves*, Knuttel 1576, A3r^o.

was forfeited of life and property.⁵⁴ The Habsburgs, aided by the blood-thirsty Inquisition, were hell-bent on ensuring the total ruin of the Low Countries; their peace proposals could not be trusted. Another reprint, this time from 1583, contained the sentence against a Cornelis de Hoogh, who had pretended to be an illegitimate son of Charles V in order to encourage rebellion against the States General and a return to Spanish rule. The commentator insisted that the story of De Hoogh was a useful reminder of the Habsburgs' sinister intentions.⁵⁵

The Spanish king was presented as praising the Duke of Alba for his loyal service in the extermination of "this useless race" that was the people of the Low Countries.⁵⁶ Similarly, the sad fate of the Counts of Egmont and Hornes, who were executed by Alba in 1568, was mentioned repeatedly as proof of Spanish evil.⁵⁷ For their part, the Archdukes were no better:

Albert was, just like Philip III, a "cousin (...) of the Inquisition". It was, after all, he who had ensured that Anna Uutenhove had been buried alive for her Anabaptist beliefs, an event that had earned Albert the nickname 'the digger' in the Republic.⁵⁸ Yet another pamphlet used a still more recent example, namely Philip III's decision to sign the ratification of the 1607 ceasefire as "Yo el Rey" (I the King).⁵⁹ The Republic's negotiators had interpreted this as an insistence on Philip's part that he was still the rightful sovereign of the Northern provinces, and, in the pamphlet, "Yo el Rey" was the name of the King who was working to "join all the world's kings under his own sceptre".⁶⁰

⁵⁴ *De Artijckelen ende besluysten der Inquisitie van Spaegnen / om die vande Nederlanden te overvallen ende verhinderen* (1607?), A1v^o–2v^o. For the 1568 edition, see *De artijckelen ende besluysten der inquisitie van Spaegnen* (1568) BT 176.

⁵⁵ *Copie Vande Belijdenisse ende Sententie Capitaal van Cornelis de Hoogh* (1608), A4r^o–v^o.

⁵⁶ *Dialogue, auquel se represente*, Van Someren 525, 26. See also *De Artijckelen*, A1v^o; *Nootelijcke Consideratien*, A3v^o. For a more detailed discussion of the continued references to Alba, see Pollmann and Stensland, "Alva's Reputation in the Early Modern Low Countries".

⁵⁷ *Dialogue, auquel se represente*, Van Someren 525, 26; *Nootelijcke Consideratien*, B3r^o.

⁵⁸ *Discours op den swermenden Treves*, Knuttel 1576, A3v^o; *Dialogue, auquel se represente*, Van Someren 525, 19–20. For an account of Anna Uutenhove's trial and Albert's involvement, see C. Harline and E. Put, *A Bishop's Tale. Mathias Hovius Among His Flock in Seventeenth-Century Flanders* (New Haven, 2000), 43–49.

⁵⁹ Allen, *Philip III and the Pax Hispanica*, 187–188.

⁶⁰ *Dialogue, auquel se represente*, Van Someren 525, 3.

There was also an international dimension to the Spanish deceit: Their actions in other countries showed what they were really like despite whatever generous offers they might present the Republic with at the negotiation table. One pamphleteer claimed that the Spaniards' own writings about their deeds in the New World made it clear that they had murdered millions of people.⁶¹ Nothing better could be expected of them in the Low Countries, whose people the Spaniards regarded as "rebellious subjects of the king, heretics and liars, unworthy of human society and only fit for fire and sword".⁶² English grievances against the Spanish were also echoed, especially in the aftermath of the failed Gunpowder Plot of November 1605. This fuelled renewed anti-Catholic hostility and was added to by, for example, the publication of a Dutch translation of James I and VI's proclamation that three of the culprits were Jesuits.⁶³

The tendency to demonise the enemy was alive and well also in Habsburg pamphleteering, although the number of titles was much smaller and, unlike in the Republic, generally appeared in print in the years before the negotiations got going.⁶⁴ Habsburg authors raged against the leaders of the Republic for refusing to accept peace. Very polite and friendly invitations to peace had been sent them, but they had not even bothered replying. Instead they remained stuck in their own stubborn wrath which was now making all of Europe suffer.⁶⁵ The rebels' heresy was another thorn in the eye of these authors, as was

⁶¹ *Nootelijcke Consideratien*, B3r^o. For a similar story, see *Discovrs. Van Pieter en Pauwels / Op de Handelinghe vanden Vreede* (1608), Van Someren 523.

⁶² *Nootelijcke Consideratien*, B3r^o.

⁶³ *Placcaet oft Mandement der Konincklijcker Majesteyt van groot Brittagnien / etc. ghepubliceert den xv Januarij / zijnde den xxv na den Nieuwen Stijl / by het welcke hy verklaert de principale Stichters des grouwelijken verraedts over synen Persoon / Erfghenaemen ende Staet des gheheelen Rijcx* (1606) Knuttel 1322. See also *Klare ende opentlijcke beschrijvinghe vande schrickelijcke verraderije / aenghevanghen by eenighe Roomsche Catholijcken / teghens den Persoone van syne Majesteyt van Enghelandt oft groot Brittaignen / ende den meestendeel der Heeren / Graven / Baroenen ende Edeldom des gantschen Landts* (1605) Wulp 1029.

⁶⁴ Cf. I. Weekhout, *Boekencensuur in de Noordelijke Nederlanden. De vrijheid van drukpers in de zeventiende eeuw* (The Hague, 1998), 42.

⁶⁵ *Nyeu Jaer Voor die van Hollant / etc. Dienende voor Antwoorde op zekere Reffereyn / onder name van eenen droom aldaer vuytgeheuen / en[de] met verscheyden scimpige figuren geprint tot Amsterdam / nopende de geschiedenis van Nyeupoort. Eensamentlijck een corte antwoorde op zekere valssche historie / den Paters vanden Jesuiten naegheschreuen* (1601), A4v^o, B2r^o. See also *Lettres d'un gentilhomme de Bruges, a vng sien amy a Brvxelles, contenant en brief les choses aduenues aux enuirs ladictes Ville, le Dimanche second iour de Iuillet, 1600* (1600) Knuttel 1135, A2v^o.

their continued refusal to obey their lawful sovereigns, the Archdukes, as demanded of them by God.⁶⁶ In the summer of 1602, the States General in The Hague commissioned two surprisingly undiplomatic 'invitations' that were spread across the Flemish countryside. The letters called for Southerners to join the struggle against the Spanish yoke and pay for the upkeep of the Republican army. If they did not, they would be attacked themselves. Southern pamphleteers reacted with outrage and denounced the pamphlets as "Brandschatz" letters. The rebels deserved nothing better than to be hanged.⁶⁷

Although often not regarded as true political pamphlets, the Archdukes' own edicts, published and sold in the same way as other printed material but proclaimed and posted publicly too, also contributed to the general vilification of the Republic. Many edicts reflected the devastation of the towns and countryside caused by the ongoing conflict and the Archdukes' efforts to address some of the concerns of their hard-pressed subjects. In these publications there was no mercy for the rebels: They were labelled enemies of both God and the common good and were also charged with responsibility for ruining the country's unity.⁶⁸ One edict proclaiming the collection of a tax to finance the war effort, for instance, referred to the "ravaging enemy" who caused "the destruction and ruin of our good subjects".⁶⁹

⁶⁶ See *Dompe-trompe op het nievw register van s'Hertogenbosch, van Ostende, ende van Vries-landt gestalt, etc. Tot verquicken van de svvaermoedige gheesten: onse Princen ter eeren, ende Gode tot danckbaerheyt* (1606), A3r^o, C2v^o; *Nyeu Jaer*, A2r^o; *Lettres d'un gentilhomme de Brvges*, Knuttel 1135, B2r^o.

⁶⁷ For the States General's epistles, see *Aende hooch ende vvel-gheboren (...) heeren (...) representerende de Staten der Nederlanden onder de Spaensche ofte eertzhertoghen regieringhe* (1602) Wulp 954 and *Alsoo van weghen die Staten Generael der vereenichde Nederlanden* (1602) Wulp 955. Responses included *Domp-hooren der Hollanscher fackel, Tot blusschinghe des Brandt briefs ende Missiue die onlancks met de volle Mane vut S'Grauen haghe gheschoten vvierden* (1602) and *Response ov solvtion, Sur vne Lettre des Estatz de Hollande, le vij. de luin en cest an 1602. escripte aux Estatz des Prouinces fideles du Pays bas* (1602).

⁶⁸ V. van Zuilen, "The Politics of Dividing the Nation? News Pamphlets as a Vehicle of Ideology and National Consciousness in the Habsburg Netherlands (1585–1609)," in *Het lange leven van het pamphlet. Boekhistorische, iconografische, literaire en politieke aspecten van pamfletten 1600–1900*, ed. J. de Kruif, M. Meijer Drees and J. Salman, (Hilversum, 2006), 66–67.

⁶⁹ *Ordonnance et instruction suyvant laquelle de la part des trois estatz du pays & duché de Brabant l'on collectera, mectra à ferme, & coeuillera respectinement les moyens accordez & imposez pour le furnissement de l'ayde extraordinaire* (1601), A2r^o. See also *Ordre et riglement general, suyvant lequel leurs altezes veuillent que lon aura dore-senauant a se conduyre au fait du passage & visite des batteaux chariots* (1602), A2r^o, B2r^o.

Ironically, given all this mutual mud-slinging, there still remained an ideal of Low Countries unity. One Southern pamphlet lamented that the provinces would all suffer ruin and devastation if they remained separated.⁷⁰ Some of the Archdukes' own edicts also expressed belief in the continued unity of the Low Countries: The Archdukes had good subjects in both loyal and rebel provinces, but in the rebel provinces a few individuals were leading the vast majority of good people into rebellion in order to profit from the war and desolation it brought to others.⁷¹ In adopting this kind of discourse, the Archdukes were here excusing the majority of people living in rebel territory for any part that they had played in the conflict, and so, in theory at least, were opening up for forgiveness, actual reconciliation and a return to Habsburg rule. But no one offered a realistic assessment of what reconciliation would have to entail. Instead, calls for unity formed part of a zero-sum game where unity was envisioned as an uncompromising, total victory for one's own side.

Other media

But pamphlets represented only one of many media. In the Habsburg provinces, pamphlet production remained smaller than in the Republic, but the multimedia communicative tradition was still put to good use. This communicative tradition involved media such as ceremonial of different kinds, displays of public piety, sermons and medals, songs and visual art, some of which will be looked at here. What we find with regard to the Truce debates, is that the calls for peace that were made in pamphlet form were simply repeating far more elaborate calls made in the many joyous entries undertaken by the Archdukes in their first months as sovereigns.

Calls for peace had already been included as part of the ceremonial welcoming of Ernest in 1594 and upon Albert's accession as governor

⁷⁰ *Complaincte et doleance de la paix*, BT 679, A3v^o.

⁷¹ *Placcaet. Van Haere doerlvchtighe hoocheyt infante, etc. Vrovvve prinsesse sovereyne van dese Nederlanden ... Nopende t'verboeht / en[de] interdictie van alle communicatie (...) met die van Hollandt / Zelandt / ende andere haere ghevnieerde ende Adherenten* (1599) BT 3854, A2r^o–v^o; *Placcart et ordonnance svr l'ovvertvre et restavration du Trafficq & Commerce d'Espagne avec les pays de pardeça, encores qu'ils soyent distraictz de l'obeyssance des Seren^{mes} Archiducqz noz Princes souuerains & naturelz.* (1603), A2r^o–v^o.

in 1596, and echoed in pamphlets both times.⁷² But the Archdukes' new sovereign status, albeit limited in different ways, allowed them access to political mechanisms that had not been available to their predecessors, who had all been mere governor generals by royal appointment.⁷³ In terms of public media, perhaps the most significant mechanism was that, as new sovereigns, they had to go through the ritual of a joyous entry and be formally sworn in. What was more, this ceremony could be repeated in as many towns as they chose, and so allowed the Archdukes to present themselves directly to a large number of their subjects. The oath and the accompanying ceremonial formed a mechanism that brought ruler and people closer together by formalising their relationship and allowing the public to give its consent, even if this was only by acclamation.⁷⁴

The Archdukes appear to have been well aware of how important the joyous entry was for their own legitimacy as rulers. Indeed, in the space of three months, they took the oath in no fewer than thirteen cities and were celebrated in several more.⁷⁵ But the extensive ceremony was, traditionally, also an opportunity for local communities to convey their concerns to the new rulers, and it was the pressing need for peace that most towns chose to emphasise during the Archdukes' joyous entries. The ways of expressing this were many and highly imaginative. In Leuven, a play was performed where the subject was the causes of the war and the hope that the Archdukes would bring it to an end.⁷⁶ In Antwerp, an enormous cone-shaped theatre, several storeys high, had been set up, displaying first the misfortunes of war, and then turning as the Archdukes rode past to show the blessings of peace.⁷⁷ In Ghent, the god Vulcan was shown melting down weapons and turning them into agricultural equipment, while in Mons the figure of Hope called for the

⁷² M. Soenen, "Fêtes et cérémonies publiques à Bruxelles aux Temps Modernes," *Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis* 68 (1985): 58–60.

⁷³ Stensland, *Habsburg Communication*, 304–305.

⁷⁴ Cf. P.K. Monod, *The Power of Kings. Monarchy and Religion in Europe 1589–1715* (New Haven, 1999), 129; M. Thøfner, *A Common Art. Urban Ceremonial in Antwerp and Brussels during and after the Dutch Revolt* (Zwolle, 2007), 20, 47, 82, 201. The use of armed militia companies to welcome the new sovereigns and grant them entry into the city also suggested that loyalty was an act of civic free will, cf. Thøfner, *A Common Art*, 98–99, 107, 201–202.

⁷⁵ See the travel plan indicated in *Collection des voyages des souverains des Pays-Bas*, ed. L.P. Gachard and Ch. Piot, 4 vols (Brussels, 1874–1882), vol. 4, 525–558.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 527.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 533; Thøfner, *A Common Art*, 216–217.

country to be saved.⁷⁸ In Valenciennes, the ceremonial included a repeat of the contest between Neptune and Pallas Athena over who should give their name to the city of Athens. Just as in the ancient story, the contest would be won by the god who could offer the city the best present. But there was a twist: Neptune was in fact a figure of Albert, dressed as the god, whereas the figure of Isabella personified Pallas Athena. Whereas Albert/Neptune offered a battle horse for use in war, Isabella/Pallas Athena offered an olive branch, the symbol of peace, and with this she won the contest.⁷⁹ The strength of ceremonial as a medium, be it in the shape of theatre, tableaux or decorations, was that it involved public participation. Also, and quite unlike pamphlets which were a far more anonymous medium, ceremonial was hard not to notice, and could reach out to literate and illiterate alike whether they took active part in it or were just hanging out of their windows to have a look.⁸⁰ Exactly like pro-peace pamphlets, however, the joyous entries also focused on the general good that would come with peace, without paying detailed attention to more problematic issues, and in this way print and ceremonial reflected each other closely.⁸¹

One problematic issue that was not dealt with was what type of relationship would be established between all the seventeen different provinces of the Low Countries in the event of peace. Although Southern pamphleteers were spending much ink on demonising their Northern neighbours for their heresy and ungodly rebellion, ceremonial display tended instead to focus on hopes for future unity. Thus, several towns deliberately included personifications of all seventeen provinces as part of the joyous entry. In Antwerp, a distinction was made between the ten Habsburg provinces and the seven rebel ones, whose female personifications were dressed in mourning, while in Valenciennes all the seventeen personifications together expressed the hope that the

⁷⁸ *Collection des voyages*, vol. 4, 540, 548, 556.

⁷⁹ Th. Louïse, *La Joyeuse Entrée d'Albert et d'Isabelle à Valenciennes* (20 février 1600) (Valenciennes, 1877), 22.

⁸⁰ As during the Archdukes' entry into Antwerp, see *Collection des voyages*, vol. 4, 533.

⁸¹ For a convincing discussion of evidence that ordinary people were fully capable of understanding messages conveyed through ceremonial, see Thøfner, *A Common Art*, 93ff. Thøfner's argument is also supported by the widespread public participation detailed in Louïse, *La Joyeuse Entrée*. For the opposite viewpoint, where none of Thøfner's evidence is discussed, see H. Soly, "Plechtige intochten in de steden van de Zuidelijke Nederlanden tijdens de overgang van Middeleeuwen naar Nieuwe Tijd. Communicatie, propaganda, spektakel," *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 97:3 (1984).

Archdukes would restore unity.⁸² Similarly, when the Archdukes summoned the States General in 1600, the benches for the rebel provinces' deputies were prepared in the same way as for the others, even though it was clear from the outset that they would not be attending.⁸³

Once the joyous entries were over, the Archdukes continued to maintain an active public profile, especially through high-visibility religious worship. Luc Duerloo has shown how Albert and Isabella focused particularly on certain cults, and it is interesting to see how their public worship reflected somewhat contradictory attitudes with regard to the Republic, in exactly the same way as their own edicts and other pamphlets did. Reflecting at least a superficial concern with reconciliation and unity was the Archdukes' involvement with the Confraternity of Our Lady's Seven Sorrows, which triggered something of a recruitment boom among Southern aristocrats.⁸⁴ This Brussels-based confraternity had had a reputation for healing civil strife since the late fifteenth century, even though actual compromise and difficult concessions were probably not what was envisaged. Indeed, the recent work done by Susie Sutch and Anne-Laure van Bruaene suggests instead that the cult was intended to boost the Habsburg claim to sovereignty. Loyalty to the rulers was the precondition, indeed the *sine qua non*, of ending civil strife.⁸⁵ The Archdukes' strong adherence to other traditional Habsburg cults suggests that they would have been well aware of the strategic thinking behind the establishment of the Confraternity of Our Lady's Seven Sorrows a century previously. Their own revival of it indicates that they in turn found the strategy of creating political allegiance through devotional communication to be a highly useful one. In this way, Albert and Isabella's public religious worship reflected the tendency to envisage peace as a

⁸² The author did not record any such distinctions when recording the display of the seventeen provinces in other towns. *Collection des voyages*, vol. 4, 522–523, 534, 536, 553.

⁸³ W. Thomas, "Andromeda Unbound. The Reign of Albert & Isabella in the Southern Netherlands, 1598–1621," in *Albert & Isabella 1598–1621*, ed. W. Thomas and L. Duerloo (Turnhout, 1998), 2.

⁸⁴ L. Duerloo, "Archducal Piety and Habsburg Power," in *Albert & Isabella*, ed. Thomas and Duerloo, 272.

⁸⁵ See S.S. Sutch and A.-L. van Bruaene, "The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary. Devotional Communication and Politics in the Burgundian-Habsburg Low Countries (c. 1490–1520)," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 61:2 (2010). I am grateful to the authors for allowing me to read their article before publication, and to Susie Sutch for taking the time to share her findings and references with me.

wholesale Habsburg triumph that we have already seen communicated in pamphlets and urban ceremonial.

Far less conciliatory, however, were the attitudes to the Northern heretics that were on display in the cults of both the Blessed Sacrament of Miracles in Brussels and Our Lady of Scherpenheuvel, near Diest and the border with the Republic. The Blessed Sacrament, which had bled after an act of Jewish desecration in the fourteenth century, had emerged as doubly miraculous after the end of Calvinist rule in Brussels in 1585 when it became clear that the sacred hosts had survived intact. The annual procession in honour of the Sacrament now became as much a commemoration of the second anti-Calvinist miracle as of the first anti-Semitic one and, after their accession, the Archdukes conscientiously attended the procession every year while also turning it into a veritable state event.⁸⁶

As for the shrine at Scherpenheuvel, this was a statue of the Virgin which reportedly, in 1603, had begun to bleed in sorrow on account of the rebels. Streams of pilgrims followed, and even a number of miracles. The Archdukes took note promptly, and already in November 1603 Albert credited Our Lady of Scherpenheuvel with the rescue of 's-Hertogenbosch, which had just withstood a rebel siege. Both he and Isabella went on a pilgrimage there to give thanks and also pray for help with the siege of Ostend.⁸⁷ Once Ostend finally surrendered, after what had been the longest siege in European history, Albert again credited Our Lady of Scherpenheuvel with the success.⁸⁸ Also significant was the location of Scherpenheuvel. Its situation near the town of Zichem echoed the events at the Old Testament town of Sichem, where the chosen people had renewed their covenant with God. The miracles were a sign that God wanted a new covenant with the people of the Low Countries.⁸⁹ It was this association with the ongoing conflict that gave Scherpenheuvel its particular resonance. The miracles and their location were proof that not only was God firmly on the Catholic side, He was also heavily involved in the conflict.⁹⁰ Clearly, with this

⁸⁶ For the importance accorded to the hosts' survival under Calvinist rule, see E. Ydens, *Histoire du S. Sacrement* (Brussels, 1605), 4r^o-v^o, **2. For the Archdukes' involvement in the cult, see Thöfner, *A Common Art*, chapter 10.

⁸⁷ L. Duerloo and M. Wingens, *Scherpenheuvel. Het Jeruzalem van de Lage Landen* (Leuven, 2002), 85.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 46.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 62.

kind of all-powerful ally, there could be no question of making compromises; the Habsburg cause would surely enjoy nothing less than a wholesale triumph.

Public piety, then, expressed the same uncompromising view of the conflict that we find in Habsburg pamphlets. Its strength as a persuasive medium, however, was much greater as not only did pious rituals encourage a good deal of public attention and participation, they were also able to reach the illiterate public in ways that pamphlets could not. Also, if the prospects of peace were not discussed more frequently in Habsburg pamphleteering than surviving copies suggest, then communication through ceremonial may have been the opinion-forming medium that was directly encountered most regularly by readers and non-readers alike.

Such a perspective is strengthened when we consider another non-print medium, namely sermons. Sadly, although sermons were a regular feature of religious worship, and were also given as part of public festivities, we know little about what was actually said in them. Very few listeners' accounts survive, and sermons were not generally published in the Habsburg provinces in this period. Those that were tended to be of the 'timeless' variety and certainly without any references to current affairs. Of course, even had such publications been available for us to study, we would still be unable to determine how the sermon would have been understood, or indeed whether the priest stuck to his script in the first place.⁹¹

One preacher whose work has been documented, however, is Franciscus Costerus. His sermons were published during the Truce, primarily in order to assist Catholics living in the Republic who did not have regular access to clergy.⁹² Although Costerus' published sermons did not include references to current affairs, they did include strong warnings against the evil rebel heretic and Costerus was not above name-calling.⁹³ He had been a driving force in attempts to convert heretics to Catholicism in Antwerp since the 1580s, and so we can assume that the fight against heresy was a constant in his preaching,

⁹¹ Cf. Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion*, 11, 14–15, 27–28; K. Porteman, "Na 350 jaar. De 'Sermoenen' van Franciscus Costerus," *Ons Geestelijk Erf* 43:3 (1969): 214–215.

⁹² Porteman, "Na 350 jaar," 213, 218, 235, 237–239.

⁹³ Cf. J. Andriessen s.j. "Costerus en zijn tegenstanders uit het Noorden," in *Miscellanea historica in honorem Leonis van der Essen* (Brussels, 1947), 776–777.

be it in print or in person. If so, his preaching was contributing to a further reinforcement of the 'us versus them' discourse that was already pervasive in pamphleteering and religious worship.

The public ceremonial in the Republic encouraged similarly uncompromising attitudes even though the Truce debates coincided with a low-point in both ceremonial in general and performative arts in particular. Ceremonial in honour of members of the Orange family declined after Maurice's triumphs following the capture of Groningen in 1594, while the Reformed Church sought to limit the activities of the Chambers of Rhetoric, which had been an essential part of urban ceremonial, as much as possible. During the course of the 1590s, plays were forbidden and Chambers were closed down in many places, while local anti-rhetorician measures developed into regional censorship from 1600 onwards.⁹⁴ The opportunity to express opinions on the peace negotiations through performative media was thus becoming ever more restricted.

But one form of ceremonial was not in decline, and that was public worship. On important occasions, such as after a military victory or when the Republic was under threat, the States General would order a general prayer day (*bededag*). This was a day for people to go to church, pray together, and sometimes fast, instead of doing their normal day-to-day work. The order to have a prayer day was conveyed in a prayer day letter (*biddagsbrief*), wherein the States General explained why it was being held and what people were asked to pray for. By identifying causes for both national concern and celebration, the prayer days functioned as a tool through which the authorities could seek to mobilise public support, while trying to make people see their own personal moral behaviour as directly connected to the well-being of the nation.⁹⁵

As with Habsburg religious worship, prayer days in the Republic also displayed contradictory attitudes with regard to 'the other side'. Until the ceasefire of 1607 and when the Truce itself was signed in 1609, prayer days were called mostly to either praise God for victories

⁹⁴ A.C. van Dixhoorn, *Lustige Geesten. Rederijkers en hun kamers in het publieke leven van de Noordelijke Nederlanden in de vijftiende, zestiende en zeventiende eeuw* (Amsterdam, 2009), 200, 216–217.

⁹⁵ P. van Rooden, *Religieuze regimes. Over godsdienst en maatschappij in Nederland, 1570–1990* (Amsterdam, 1996), 83, 105–106; A.Th. van Deursen, *Bavianen en slijkgeuzen. Kerk en kerkvolk ten tijde van Maurits en Oldenbarnevelt* (Franeker, 1998), 27.

against the Habsburgs or to pray for His protection in the face of Habsburg advances. Common to all of these was that the Habsburg side was demonised in much the same way as in pamphlets, albeit in far less detail. Thus, it was customary to pray for protection against the shrewd tricks and violent attacks employed by the enemy to impose their tyranny.⁹⁶ As in the case of pamphlets, the international dimension of the conflict was also recognised in that prayers were offered for the reign of King James I and VI, and for his ability to help the Republic fight off the cunning assaults of their mutual enemy.⁹⁷ Similarly, news of the Gunpowder Plot and its failure was also spread by the calling of a prayer day: This type of treachery was of concern to all of Christendom, and particularly to the United Provinces.⁹⁸

But allusions to the Habsburg enemy's deceit, almost a *biddagsbrief* staple, came to an abrupt halt after the ceasefire of May 1607 was signed. Unlike the many anti-peace pamphlets, the *biddagsbrief* ordering a celebration suggested that one could have complete trust in the Archdukes' decision to negotiate with the Republic 'as though' it were an independent, sovereign nation on which they had no claim. It was, after all, God who had made them see sense.⁹⁹ But such trust was short-lived. Already in January 1608, just before negotiations for a permanent peace were due to start, there was a return to prayers for protection against any "archcunning" assaults planned by the enemy. At this point, people were asked to pray that the Holy Ghost attend the negotiation meetings and thus direct discussions towards a good conclusion.¹⁰⁰ The same request was made in November that year, just as the States General was on the brink of achieving support for the Truce from all the provinces, including the reluctant Zeeland.¹⁰¹

Hostility and suspicion were also reflected in medals cast in the Republic in the years prior to the Truce. In 1598, after a certain Peter de Panne had been condemned to death for attempting to assassinate Maurice, the States of Zeeland had a medal made to warn against

⁹⁶ See the *biddagsbrieven* for 19 November 1595, 22 January 1597, 17 March 1598, 25 August 1599, 18 October 1600, 23 June 1604, 20 September 1606 and 17 January 1607, in N.C. Kist, *Neêrland's bededagen en biddagsbrieven*, 2 vols (Leiden, 1849), vol. 2, 74–75, 77, 79, 82, 90, 95–96.

⁹⁷ See the *biddagsbrieven* for 30 April and 13 August 1603, *ibid.*, 86–88.

⁹⁸ See the *biddagsbrief* for 14 December 1605, *ibid.*, 93–94.

⁹⁹ See the *biddagsbrief* for 9 May 1607, *ibid.*, 96–97.

¹⁰⁰ See the *biddagsbrief* for 9 January 1608, *ibid.*, 100. For the negotiations, see Allen, *Philip III and the Pax Hispanica*, 203.

¹⁰¹ See the *biddagsbrief* for 19 November 1608, Kist, *Neêrland's bededagen en biddagsbrieven*, vol. 2, 101; Allen, *Philip III and the Pax Hispanica*, 227.

Habsburg deceit. The depiction showed Archduke Albert handing Maurice an olive branch as an offer of peace at the same time as Peter de Panne was assaulting him.¹⁰² Ten years later, the theme remained the same. This time the States of Zeeland expressed their suspicions of the Habsburg peace proposals by using an example from classical antiquity, the Trojan horse. The medal showed a big wooden horse being wheeled into a city while the inscription read “Trojans, do not trust this horse”.¹⁰³ Clearly, then, medals too echoed the pamphlet allegation that the Habsburgs would use the peace to lure the Republic into a state of unpreparedness, only to then launch a final, fatal attack.

In the Habsburg provinces, medals were not focused on the Republic. Instead, the spotlight was on the benefits of peace. One medal, from 1597, showed a woman in despair, kneeling amid piles of weapons in front of several burning houses, and pleading with an angel to help her. The inscription was hopeful: “God will put an end to these disasters”.¹⁰⁴ Similarly, the city of Brussels had a medal cast in honour of the Archdukes’ accession in 1599 where the two sovereigns were depicted with olive branches. “He will fulfil our expectations” read the confident inscription. The verso side of the medal was more militant, though, showing the Archangel Michael slaying the dragon.¹⁰⁵ St Michael was one of Brussels’ two patron saints, and both he and St Gudula, the other one, were strongly associated with the struggle against devilry.¹⁰⁶ Although the olive branches suggested the “expectations” were for peace, the other side of the coin may also have alluded to hopes for a militant Catholic triumph, again echoing attitudes reflected in pamphlets and ceremonial.

Conclusion

We began by asking what the function of pamphlets was in political debate and decision-making, as well as how pamphlets functioned in

¹⁰² G. van Loon, *Histoire metallique des XVII provinces des Pays-Bas, depuis l'abdication de Charles-Quint, jusqu'à la paix de Bade en MDCCXVI*, 3 vols (The Hague, 1732–1737), vol. 1, 498.

¹⁰³ G. van Loon, *Beschryving der Nederlandsche historipenningen: Of beknopt Verhaal van t'gene sedert overdracht der heerschappye van Keyzer Karel den Vyfden op Koning Philips zynen zoon, Tot het sluyten van den Uytrechtschen Vreede, In de zeventien Nederlandsche Gewesten is voorgevallen*, 3 vols (The Hague, 1723–1731), vol. 2, 41.

¹⁰⁴ Van Loon, *Histoire metallique*, vol. 1, 488.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 521.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Thøfner, *A Common Art*, 174.

relation to other media. Against the background of the Truce debates in both the Republic and the Habsburg provinces, it seems pamphlets must be viewed as a lobbying tool far more than as an accurate reflection of the debates from which political decisions emerged. Pamphlets do, in fact, appear to have been so much an instrument for lobbying that they became divorced from the actual discussions that took place behind closed doors, and instead functioned according to a completely different dynamic. What was at stake in the pamphlets was not what was at stake in the discussions in the States General. The same holds true for Habsburg pamphleteering which excelled at building castles in the air rather than drawing attention to the less pleasant consequences of peace.

However, pamphlets were no different from other media in this regard. Both ceremonial, medals and sermons argued the same case as pamphlets, and often with greater reach. All media on both sides, despite their conflicting views on the desirability of peace, reinforced divisions by demonising the other side and perpetuating unrealistic expectations. Pamphlets, then, must be seen as one among many media, some of which may have been better suited for persuasion.

What is more, the Truce debates serve to highlight the limits of pamphleteering in several different ways. First, in the Republic, the case that was argued so frequently and with such aplomb was not the one that won through. In fact, not only did the anti-peace argument not win, the pro-peace argument that did had not been voiced in pamphlet form at all. Second, although pamphlets in theory were a medium that lent itself well to widespread use by ordinary people, the Truce debates suggest that, in practice, they were overwhelmingly used only by the elite. It was rich merchants' interests that were defended in print, not those of farmers and ordinary city dwellers struggling with high taxes. Third, this restricted use of pamphlets suggests that the debate may have been more democratic had local communities been freer to engage in public ceremonial. In the Habsburg provinces, where there was greater use of the traditional ceremonial media, there was also room for local communities to communicate their own concerns in a way that was not possible in the Republic. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the failure of the unrealistic and idealised discourse that both sides pursued in media suggests that there was only so much any medium could do to change people's opinions. What mattered in the end was not public argument, but people's own real life experience.

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